

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Invite persons present to pause for a few moments of silent recollection and to offer any special intentions.)

Reader 1: Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

All: He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.

Reader 1: Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

Leader: In the *Living With Christ Sunday Missal*, James Sauer shares this reflection about this gospel.

"We often interpret the parable of the vineyard as about God, his kingdom and Christ. Still, if we look closely, it also tells us about ourselves as God's People.

First, as People we are *privileged*. The landowner equipped the vineyard with everything the tenants needed to do their job and do it well – the hedge, the winepress and the tower. God not only gives us a vocation, but also the means to fulfill it.

Second, as People we are *free*. The owner let the tenants do their work as they saw fit. He was not an overseer watching every move. God gives us our tasks and trusts us to complete them.

Third, because we are free, we are *responsible*. We are answerable for the vocations God has given us. The fruit of our vocation is a standard of God's judgement of us as stewards.

Finally, human sin is *intentional*. The tenants planned their rebellion. But their plan did not succeed. Beyond our excuses for not yielding to God what is his lies God's judgement.

Later we are told that the leaders of Israel recognized that Jesus was talking about them and their stewardship of God's kingdom. As Jesus speaks to us about our vocations as stewards – tenants – of his kingdom, are we faithful?"

All: Lord God, by the virtue of our baptism into the Body of Christ here on earth, you call us each by name to the vocation of priest, prophet and shepherd king. Grant us the grace to say "Yes" to your call, and to remain faithful to the privilege, freedom and responsibility which our vocation requires. May your trust in us as stewards bear the fruits of your kingdom. Amen.