

## Gospel Reflection

The first sentence of today's Gospel parable can be easily overlooked: "There was a land-owner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower" (Matthew 21:33). It is difficult for us to imagine the enormous amount of time, money, and effort it must have taken for a construction project of this kind. Once completed, the vineyard must have been a beautiful place, not unlike the vineyards one can find in places like the Napa Valley in California. Vineyards are, by their very nature, places of beauty and life. The vineyard in today's Gospel, however, becomes the setting for treachery and murder. All too often the vineyard that is this fragile planet of ours likewise becomes a setting for treachery and murder.

Isaiah's marvelous description of the vineyard reminds us of the creation passages from the book of Genesis. That description generates faint echoes of the oft-repeated line from Genesis: "and God saw how good it was" (Genesis 1:25). The sad reality is that we who are called to be good stewards of this vineyard sometimes make bad choices. Sometimes in our arrogance we fail to care for the vineyard of creation. Like the wicked tenants, we care more for our own personal gain than for the virtues of goodness and righteousness. Pope John Paul II used the term "the culture of death" to describe this kind of behavior. The parables we hear are meant to cut right to our hearts and force us to look squarely at our behaviors and attitudes. May this week's parable open our eyes to those times when we stray away from the goodness and beauty of God's vineyard and make decisions that support the culture of death. May we be strengthened in our efforts to become good stewards whose actions bring forth the fruits of life and love.

## KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

*Matthew 21:33-43*

S C N U M A E A D X T S P  
C R O B I L Y R X A T T R  
R Y S R D H A J K S W N O  
I P R E N Y T E E B I A D  
P L R E E E N I L A D V U  
T S H N S A R P U T R R C  
U S I D W P V S T R X E E  
R V Q A F F E Z T F F S D  
E U Y E J W A C A O B S P  
S B I N H E R I T A N C E  
G H R E N W O D N A L E S  
C T E N A N T S N E V I G  
J X I V D C J E Z H X N N

**Find these words from the Gospel passage.**

|         |            |               |
|---------|------------|---------------|
| SON     | RESPECT    | LAND OWNER    |
| FRUIT   | TAKEN AWAY | INHERITANCE   |
| ELDERS  | SCRIPTURES | CORNERSTONE   |
| PRODUCE | SERVANTS   | CHIEF PRIESTS |
| GIVEN   | TENANTS    | VINEYARD      |

## Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time  
10/5/2008*

*Matthew 21:33-43  
Faith-Sharing  
Questions of the Week*



***Our Lady of the Assumption***

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Claremont, CA

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## Call to Prayer

*We begin by calling upon God:*

**In the Name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the  
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with  
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

**The Word of God:** *Matthew 21:33-43*

### ***The Gospel according to Matthew***

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: "Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his **servants** to the tenants to obtain his produce.

"But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed and a third they stoned. Again, he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, 'They will respect my son.'

"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and **acquire his inheritance.**' They seized him, **threw him out** of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when the time comes?"

They answered him, "He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read the Scriptures: '*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done and it is wonderful in our eyes?*' Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to people who produce its fruit."

### ***The Gospel of the Lord***



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### **Gospel Glossary**

**servants:** This could be a metaphor for the Prophets, John the Baptist, Christian missionaries, the Jewish community, or simply righteous people in general.

**"acquire his inheritance":** Under Jewish law, the land of a Jewish convert who died without an heir passed to his tenants upon his death.

**"threw him out":** Mark's Gospel (written before Matthew's) says the son is killed *in* the vineyard and his body cast *out*. The reversed account here in Matthew's Gospel probably reflects the later tradition that Jesus died *outside* of Jerusalem.

## Faith Sharing

### **Questions of the Week**

- What does it mean to be a tenant (rather than the owner) of God's vineyard?
- What fruit do I produce for the Lord?
- How do I assist others in producing the fruit of the Lord?
- How do I show hospitality to those sent to do God's work?

## Closing Prayer

Father in Heaven,

Your love for us surpasses all our hopes and desires. Forgive us our failings, keep us in your peace, and lead us in the way of salvation.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

**Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary**