

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Within your will, O Lord, all things are established, and there is none that can resist your will. For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth, and all that is held within the circle of heaven; you are the Lord of all.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 79)

ANTIPHON: The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

RESPONSE: The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

LECTOR: You brought a vine out of Egypt; to plant it you drove out the nations. It stretched out its branches to the sea, to the Great River it stretched out its shoots. **R.**

LECTOR: Then why have you broken down its walls? It is plucked by all who pass by. It is ravaged by the boar of the forest, devoured by the beasts of the field. **R.**

LECTOR: God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. **R.**

LECTOR: And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name. God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeks him. **Or**

Though many, we are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one Bread and one Chalice.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 5:1-7; Philippians 4:6-9; Matthew 21:33-43.

NEXT WEEK (28th Sunday Yr A) Isaiah 25:6-10; Psalm 22; Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20; Matthew 22:1-14.

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Striving for
what's good
and just



4 October 2020 27th Sunday Year A

The image of a vineyard is often used in the bible to refer to God's chosen people, Israel. In today's first reading, the prophet Isaiah takes up this image and speaks in poetic terms of "my friend" and "his love for his vineyard." Having lovingly and carefully tended his vineyard, the friend expected it to be productive and yield grapes, but instead it produced "sour grapes." The friend responded with punishing measures. Honing the meaning as it relates to his listeners, Isaiah explains: "He [God] expected justice, but found bloodshed; integrity, but only a cry of distress."

In the gospel, Jesus also takes up the image of the vineyard and, in his parable of the wicked tenants, tells of a man who plants a vineyard, painstakingly prepares it and fences it to protect it, and then, as absent landowners often do, he lets it out to tenants. When the time comes to collect the produce, the man sends his servants, not once but twice, but each time they are killed by the tenants. Finally, he sends his beloved son and heir, but, shockingly, the tenants beat and kill him too. Jesus then asks his listeners: "What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?" They answer 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."

The specific identity of the son is not made explicit in the parable, but Matthew adds that Jesus then quotes from Psalm 118 -- "The stone that the builders rejected has become the keystone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes" -- and this makes it clear that Jesus means that the son is himself and that his own death awaits him.

The unexpected reversal -- that what was rejected by the builders becomes the most important keystone -- is very typical of Jesus' teaching, turning his listeners' expectations upside down. The last shall be first; the least shall be the greatest; the rejected shall be the most valuable: God's ways are not our ways.

For us in our time, whatever the trials and tribulations we face, the readings remind us of God's steadfast love and boundless care for us, individually and as a community and for our world, and that what is asked and expected of us are the works of justice and lives of integrity.

Paul, in his Letter to the Philippians, exhorts us to strive for what is good and just and pure and honourable. He counsels us not to worry and to pray for anything we need, and he assures us that the peace of God is so much greater than we can understand or indeed imagine. Let justice and integrity be the hallmark of our lives.

Anne Hunt

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