

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those
who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 5:1-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Let me sing to my friend
the song of his love for his vineyard.
My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.
He dug the soil, cleared it of stones,
and planted choice vines in it.
In the middle he built a tower,
he dug a press there too.
He expected it to yield grapes,
but sour grapes were all that it gave.
And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
I ask you to judge
between my vineyard and me.
What could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not done?
I expected it to yield grapes.
Why did it yield sour grapes instead?
Very well, I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on,
and knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.
I will lay it waste, unpruned, undug;
overgrown by the briar and the thorn.
I will command the clouds
to rain no rain on it.
Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
is the House of Israel,
and the men of Judah that chosen plant.
He expected justice, but found bloodshed,
integrity, but only a cry of distress.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 79

Response:

The vineyard of the Lord is the House of Israel.

1. 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.)
2. 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.)
3. 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.)
4. 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.)

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:6-9

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise. Keep doing all the things that you learnt from me and have been taught by me and have heard or seen that I do. Then the God of peace will be with you.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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!

GOSPEL

Matthew 21:33-43

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, "Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a wine press in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son' he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his

inheritance.' So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They answered, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone. This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?" "I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under

Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray,
the sacrifices instituted by your commands
and, through the sacred mysteries,
which we celebrate with dutiful service,
graciously complete the sanctifying work
by which you are pleased to redeem us.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord is good to those who hope in him,
to the soul that seeks him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant us, almighty God,
that we may be refreshed and nourished
by the Sacrament which we have received,
so as to be transformed into what we
consume.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



The symbol of the vineyard has occurred several times recently in the Gospel readings. It is a common symbol in the bible for the people of Israel.

In the extract today, there are clearly allegorical features: the vineyard stands for Israel; the tenant farmers represent Israel's leaders; the owner of the vineyard is the Lord; the earlier messengers are the prophets; the son is Jesus. The context is Jesus' confrontation with the religious leaders of his day. The background is the common practice of the day of an absentee landlord leasing out his property to tenants and expecting rent to be paid in the form of a share of the produce.

The parable situates Jesus in the line of the prophets whom the Lord had sent to Israel and who were routinely ignored. It foretells the way in which the leaders of the people would reject Jesus and have him put to death outside the walls of Jerusalem. (The city would later be destroyed by the Romans.)

It is important that in these controversies, these arguments between Jesus and the leaders of his day, we hear the voice of Matthew and his community of Jewish converts to the Gospel and person of Jesus. These passages represent disputes between the later Church and Synagogue, and present all the characteristics of a bitter family feud.

It is vital that we keep in mind that the parable is concerned with the *leadership* of Israel and the need to replace its members, rather than with replacing the people as a whole. The vineyard itself is not to be destroyed but entrusted to other leaders. In this sense, Jesus' closing remark that *the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit* should be understood as directed entirely at the chief priests and Pharisees: it would then mean that the kingdom would be given to people (that is, other leaders) who would produce its fruit. Jesus was a Jew, and the Jewish Matthew presents him very much in this light. ■

REFLECT

The parable of the Vineyard has been presented as God rejecting the People of Israel as a whole and replacing them with the Christian Church. We might remember that Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Peter and the other apostles were all Jews. The responsibility for the death of Jesus lies with the leaders of the people of his time, not with the people in general then or the Jewish people since. We should not suppose that the Christian Church has supplanted the People of Israel: both exist in relationship with the same Lord and we should seek out and build on what is common to both in a spirit of respect and collaboration. The Catholic Church has in recent years made great strides in appreciating and making available to its members the Hebrew Scriptures which we call the Old Testament. We should be careful to keep in mind the background against which apparently anti-Jewish texts in the New Testament were written. ■

LEARN

The vineyard is a common symbol in the bible for the people of Israel.

Matthew condemns the leaders of the people, not the people as a whole.

The Church is not to be identified with the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is not to be identified with the Church: it is a mystery of which the Church is a part.

DO

Read the document of the Second Vatican Council *Nostra Aetate* on The Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions: or a book or article which explores the relation between the Catholic Church and Judaism; or part of a biography of Pope Francis which deals with his friendship with a Jewish Rabbi.

SAY

**We are your creation:
you are the Lord of all.**