

Monday of the Ninth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 12:1-12): Jesus began to speak to the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and left on a journey.

At the proper time he sent a servant to the tenants to obtain from them some of the produce of the vineyard. But they seized him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent them another servant. And that one they beat over the head and treated shamefully. He sent yet another whom they killed. So, too, many others; some they beat, others they killed. He had one other to send, a beloved son. He sent him to them last of all, thinking, 'They will respect my son.' But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they seized him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come, put the tenants to death, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this Scripture passage: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes?"

They were seeking to arrest him, but they feared the crowd, for they realized that he had addressed the parable to them. So they left him and went away.

"He sent a servant to the tenants to obtain from them some of the produce of the vineyard"

Today, our Lord invites us to have a walk on his vineyard: "A man planted a vineyard... he leased it to tenant farmers" (Mk 12,1). We are all tenants of this vineyard. The vineyard is our own soul, the Church and the whole world. God wants fruits from us. First, our personal holiness; then, a constant apostolate with our friends, who will be encouraged by our example and word to get closer to Christ every day; finally, the world, that will become a better place to live in, if we sanctify our professional work, our social relations and our duties towards the common good.

What kind of tenants are we? Those who work hard or those who get annoyed when the master sends his servants to collect the rent from us? We may oppose those in charge of helping us give the fruits God expects. We may object to the teachings of the Holy Church and of the Pope, the bishops, or perhaps, more modestly, those of our parents, our spiritual director, or a good friend of ours who is trying to help us. We may even become aggressive, and try to wound them or even kill them through criticism and negative comments. We should examine ourselves about the real motives of such an attitude on our part. Maybe we need a deeper knowledge of our Faith; maybe we need a deeper knowledge of ourselves, a better examination of conscience to discover the reason why we do not want to produce fruits.

Let us ask Our Mother Mary to help us work with love under the guidance of the Pope. We can all be "good shepherds" and "fishers" of men. "Let us go and pray to the Lord to help us bear fruit that endures. Only in this way will the earth be changed from a valley of tears to a garden of God" (Benedict XVI). We can carry our souls, or that of our friends, or the whole world closer to Jesus Christ, if we only read and meditate the teaching of the Holy Father, and try to put them into practice.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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"Thus do I behold thee, dear Jesus! A dearest and most loving and good Jesus, who alone, as our

Savior, couldst save us from our ancient wounds, who delivered thee over to so bitter a death? Who could so lower thee with the indignity of those wounds so harsh and moreover so degrading? O good Jesus, thou dearest vine?" (Saint Bonaventure)

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"He called us with love, he protects us. Yet then he gives us freedom, he gives us all this love 'on lease'. It's as if he were to say to us: protect and keep my love just as I safeguard you. This is the dialogue between God and us: to safeguard love." (Francis)

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"Without the Creator, the creature vanishes (Vatican Council II). This is the reason why believers know that the love of Christ urges them to bring the light of the living God to those who do not know him or who reject him." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 49)