



# Celebrate

Sunday, October 8, 2023  
19th Sunday after Pentecost

*In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.*

## Prayer of the Day

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Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Isaiah 5:1-7

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*The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "wild grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.*

Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his  
vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
<sup>2</sup>He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst  
of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

<sup>3</sup>And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and people of Judah,  
judge between me  
and my vineyard.

<sup>4</sup>What more was there to do for my  
vineyard  
that I have not done in it?  
When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

<sup>5</sup>And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.  
<sup>6</sup>I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briars  
and thorns;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.

<sup>7</sup>For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
he expected justice,  
but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness,  
but heard a cry!



Look down from heav'n, O God; be - hold and tend this vine.

Restore us, O <sup>1</sup> God of hosts;

let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>1</sup> shall be saved.

<sup>8</sup>You have brought a vine <sup>1</sup> out of Egypt;  
you cast out the nations and <sup>1</sup> planted it.

<sup>9</sup>You cleared the <sup>1</sup> ground for it;  
it took root and <sup>1</sup> filled the land.

<sup>10</sup>The mountains were covered <sup>1</sup> by its shadow  
and the towering cedar trees <sup>1</sup> by its boughs. **R**

<sup>11</sup>You stretched out its tendrils <sup>1</sup> to the sea  
and its branches <sup>1</sup> to the river.

<sup>12</sup>Why have you broken <sup>1</sup> down its wall,  
so that all who pass by pluck <sup>1</sup> off its grapes?

<sup>13</sup>The wild boar of the forest has <sup>1</sup> ravaged it,  
and the beasts of the field have <sup>1</sup> grazed upon it.

<sup>14</sup>Turn now, O <sup>1</sup> God of hosts,  
look <sup>1</sup> down from heaven;

<sup>15</sup>behold and <sup>1</sup> tend this vine;  
preserve what your right <sup>1</sup> hand has planted. **R**

*Paul reviews some of his supposed credentials, which no longer have any bearing in comparison to the right relationship he has been given through the death of Christ. The power of Christ's resurrection motivates him to press on toward the ultimate goal, eternal life with Christ.*

[Paul writes:] If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup>circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup>as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

<sup>7</sup>Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. <sup>8</sup>More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup>and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the

law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. <sup>10</sup>I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

## Gospel

## Matthew 21:33-46

*Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.*

[Jesus said to 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. <sup>34</sup>When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. <sup>35</sup>But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. <sup>37</sup>Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>38</sup>But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' <sup>39</sup>So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. <sup>40</sup>Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" <sup>41</sup>They said to

him, "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."

<sup>42</sup>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?'

<sup>43</sup>"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. <sup>44</sup>The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

<sup>45</sup>When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. <sup>46</sup>They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

## Prayers of Intercession

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*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

Trusting in the transformative power of God's loving Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of all grace, you are the source of life and joy. Strengthen the resolve of your church throughout the world (*global mission partners may be named*), that together we press on toward the goal of your heavenly call in Jesus Christ. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of all creation, you plant and nourish the earth as your own precious vineyard. Bless fields and orchards and the hands of those who labor in them, that your people are fed with an abundant harvest of good fruit. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of all the earth, you desire peace and justice between nations and peoples. Guide leaders of nations, states, provinces, and cities, that they faithfully govern your people with wisdom, integrity, and compassion. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of all compassion, in Christ, you lovingly poured yourself out like wine for your people. Have mercy on all who mourn, who struggle with their mental health, who cry out for justice, who hunger, and all in any need (*especially*). God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

God of all steadfastness, you set Christ as the cornerstone and foundation of the church. Build up this congregation as living stones, that it stands in the community as a witness to your enduring faithfulness and love. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of all hope, the saints who came before us lived and died with their hearts fixed on you. We give you thanks for their faithful witness, and we wait with hope for the great day when we join their voices in praise. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending love and amazing grace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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**Monday** (Day of Thanksgiving [Canada]) Psalm 144. **Tuesday** 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. **Wednesday** John 11:45-57. **Thursday** Psalm 23. **Friday** James 4:4-10. **Saturday** Isaiah 24:17-23. **Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Teresa of Avila, teacher, renewer of the church, died 1582) Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14.

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