

**Homily Resources and Petitions for the
27th Sunday of SEASON, Cycle A (4 October 2020)
Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi**

Homily Helps

† Scripture passages to note:

Isaiah 5: Then he looked for the crop of grapes, but what it yielded was wild grapes.

Philippians 4: Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 21: Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey.

† Comment for the day:

The Scripture texts today are challenging. They have been used to foster an image of a vengeful God and the gospel has been one of the texts that down through the Christian era has been used to justify anti-Semitism. So, it is important for us to realize that the Church offers them as an opportunity and motivation to reflect on our lives and our world in the twenty-first century.

The vineyard is a metaphor for God's people. Jesus makes use of the image in his condemnation of the leaders of the Jewish people who were looking for ways to discredit him and his message. Isaiah portrays the Kingdom of Israel as a vineyard and God as its owner whose efforts to form Israel into a people of righteousness and justice have faltered. Instead of acting justly, the powerful of the land oppressed the poor, who cried aloud for help. The psalm makes the same charges against Israel and voices the hope that the new king will lead the people into renewed obedience to God and to peace.

Jesus' parable about the vineyard tenants is part of his ongoing dispute with the chief priests and the elders, who have forsaken their role as leaders whose duty is to guide their people in the observance of God's law. They have been given a sacred trust to bring forth fruit for the owner, but instead they kill what is most precious to him. The story comes at a critical time in Matthew's Gospel; Jesus has just entered Jerusalem in triumph and cleansed the temple. His criticism of the leaders is the last straw, and the next day they begin to plot his death.

What is the meaning of the parable for us? From where we stand, the vineyard is the Reign of God ushered in by Jesus. All creation, the whole web of life, is the part of creation that God has given us to tend. We do not have kings who are responsible for our behavior. Rather, it is our responsibility to live out our faith by caring for our common home. We can do this by standing alongside the poor and oppressed, who cry out because they are most severely affected by environmental destruction, racism and climate change.

The biblical communities were burdened by corrupt leadership which they were powerless to change. We have a chance at influencing our leaders by the way we vote, protest and take part in the political process. We can make choices in what we buy and how we live our lives, and these choices can promote the well-being of God's wonderful creation, along with all our sisters and brothers. If our choices are countercultural, we can expect criticism and opposition.

On this feast of Francis of Assisi, we are presented with a fantastic role model: a person who read the signs of the times and made choices that were very different from those of the people around him. He inspired thousands to follow him in the footsteps of Jesus, proclaiming the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all peoples and of creation itself.

† Passages from *Laudato Si'* to note:

I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. (#10)

Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human. (#11)

The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us: he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. (#13)

A politics concerned with immediate results, supported by consumerist sectors of the population, is driven to produce short-term growth. In response to electoral interests, governments are reluctant to upset the public with measures which could affect the level of consumption or create risks for foreign investment. The myopia of power politics delays the inclusion of a far-sighted environmental agenda within the overall agenda of governments... True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. (#178)

Let us keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility of for the common good from those who wield greater power. (#196)

Related Prayers of the Faithful

Option 1: That all people might enjoy the rights and privileges commensurate with their dignity as children of God, and take part in earth's abundant feast, let us pray to the Lord.

Option 2: That citizens hold our leaders accountable for creating policies that defend the earth, protect life and promote equality for all, we pray to the Lord.

Further Resources

Feedback: Info@CatholicClimateCovenant.org

Webpage: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/english-homily-help

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