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Friday's Gospel: God's Trust in Us

Gospel for Friday in the 2nd
Week of Lent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 21:33-43.45-46*)

“Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the

first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

'The very stone which the builders rejected

has become the head of the corner;

this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes'?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. But when they tried to arrest him, they feared the multitudes, because they held him to be a prophet.

Commentary

The Gospel for today's Mass presents us with one of Jesus' most dramatic parables. For it reveals the darkness that lies in the human heart. The image of the vineyard refers us to the

Old Testament, and especially to the fifth chapter of the book of Isaiah. The vineyard is Israel, the people upon whom God has poured out his love and gifts in such a special way. It calls up images of care, fruit, life. Through his preaching and deeds Jesus tried to make us understand God the Father's immeasurable love for us: a faithful love that never withdraws, even when rejected.

This parable of our Lord speaks about people who have turned their backs on God's love and ruined what has been entrusted to them. Once again ingratitude, pride and greed are the origin of destruction and death. An almost irrational blindness could lead us to think that everything we have is owed to our own merits: that no one has given it to us. A hardened heart could come to view the rest of creation only in terms of what is useful for oneself. *What have you that you did not receive? If then*

you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift? (1 Cor 4:7).

For true fruit to be produced, gratitude and humble love are needed. We are creatures, and God has wanted us to share in the care and government of what has come from his hands, of all creation. But in a very particular way He wants us to care for people, and with a special commitment for those who share our faith. Hence we need to humbly welcome God's gifts and put ourselves at the service of others, realizing that we are bearers of the Gospel so that everyone can come to know God's love for them and what He is calling us to. All of this is possible only if we welcome Christ, who is the cornerstone, because only He can illumine our entire being, and help us experience deeply the Father's love and see all men and women as his dearly beloved children.

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