



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 8 October 2017

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

This Sunday's liturgy offers us the parable of the tenants to whom a landowner lends the vineyard which he has planted, and then goes away (cf. Mt 21:33-43). This is how the loyalty of these tenants is tested: the vineyard is entrusted to them, they are to tend it, make it bear fruit and deliver its harvest to the owner. When the time comes to harvest the grapes, the landlord sends his servants to pick the fruit. However, the vineyard tenants assume a possessive attitude. They do not consider themselves to be simple supervisors, but rather landowners, and they refuse to hand over the harvest. They mistreat the servants, to the point of killing them. The landowner is patient with them. He sends more servants, larger in number than the previous ones, but the result is the same. In the end, he patiently decides to send his own son. But those tenants, prisoners to their own possessive behaviour, also kill the son, reasoning that, in this way, they would have the inheritance.

This narrative allegorically illustrates the reproaches of the prophets in the story of Israel. It is a history that belongs to us. It is about the Covenant which God wished to establish with mankind and in which he also called us to participate. Like any other love story, this story of the Covenant has its positive moments too, but it is also marked by betrayal and rejection. In order to make us understand how God the Father responds to the rejection of his love and his proposal of an alliance, the Gospel passage puts a question on the lips of the owner of the vineyard: "When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" (v. 40). This question emphasizes that God's disappointment at the wicked behaviour of mankind is not the last

word! This is the great novelty of Christianity: a God who, even though disappointed by our mistakes and our sins, does not fail to keep his Word, does not give up and, most of all, does not seek vengeance!

My brothers and sisters, God does not avenge himself. God loves, he does not avenge himself. He waits for us to forgive us, to embrace us. Through the “rejected stones” — and Christ is the first stone that the builders rejected — through situations of weakness and sin, God continues to circulate “the new wine” of his vineyard, namely mercy. This is the new wine of the Lord’s vineyard: mercy. There is only one obstacle to the tenacious and tender will of God: our arrogance and our conceit which, at times also becomes violence! Faced with these attitudes where no fruit is produced, the Word of God retains all its power to reprimand and reproach: “Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it” (v. 43).

The urgency of replying with good fruits to the call of the Lord, who asks us to become his vineyard, helps us understand what is new and original about the Christian faith. It is not so much the sum of precepts and moral norms but rather, it is first and foremost a proposal of love which God makes through Jesus and continues to make with mankind. It is an invitation to enter into this love story, by becoming a lively and open vine, rich in fruits and hope for everyone. A closed vineyard can become wild and produce wild grapes. We are called to leave this vineyard to put ourselves at the service of our brothers and sisters who are not with us, in order to shake each other and encourage each other, to remind ourselves that we must be the Lord’s vineyard in every environment, even the more distant and challenging ones.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us invoke the intercession of the Most Holy Mary, so that she may help us to be everywhere, in particular in the peripheries of society, the vineyard that the Lord planted for the good of all and to bring the new wine of the Lord’s mercy.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, yesterday Father Arsenio da Trigolo (in the world Giuseppe Migliavacca), a priest belonging to the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor and the Founder of the Sisters of Mary the Consoler, was beatified in Milan. Let us praise the Lord for this humble disciple of his, who even in adversity and trial — he had many — never lost hope.

I warmly greet all of you pilgrims, especially the families and parish groups from Italy and various parts of the world. In particular, the faithful from Australia, France and Slovakia, as well as Poland, who spiritually join their compatriots who are celebrating the Day of the Pope today.

I warmly greet the group of the Shrine from Our Lady of Fatima in Città della Pieve, accompanied

by Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti: Dear brothers and sisters I encourage you to continue your journey of faith with joy, under the caring and tender gaze of our Heavenly Mother. She is our refuge and our hope! Keep going forward!

I greet the faithful from Grumo Appula, the Scouts from Gioiosa Ionica, the parish choir of Siror (Trento) and the confirmands from San Teodoro (Sardinia).

I wish everyone a Happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!