

Read

Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalm 80:9, 12, 13-14,
15-16, 19-20

Philippians 4:6-9

Matthew 21:33-43

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 4, 2020



REFLECTION

Relationships. Friendships. Community. Family. These are the cornerstones of our interactions with others. The Gospel reading today reminds us that Jesus is the foundation of all of these. There are many examples in our world today about what it would look like if Jesus were not the cornerstone of one's life. Think of the actions of the tenants in the parable. What events are happening in the world today that mirror this self-centered, greedy, and prone to violence behavior? The tenants were thinking of themselves rather than of the relationship they have with the landowner. We do not live like the tenants when it comes to interacting with others, but there are times when we ignore our relationships with others by prioritizing our own wants over others' needs. However disheartening this may be, the Gospel ends on a positive note, reminding us that when we act selflessly and have Christ as our cornerstone, we bear good fruit and build up the Kingdom of God.



ACTION

Having Christ as the cornerstone of your family and relationships is an important part of living the Christian life. Think about the ways your family keeps Christ at its center. What else can you be doing as a family. This week, come up with one new way your family can keep its focus on Christ. Maybe have everyone come together for prayer one night, or read this week's readings together as a family, or try to all attend the same Mass and sit with one another. Even small things like this can help us to change our attitudes so that we bear good fruit in the rest of our activities.



October is the month of the Rosary. Download a rosary app for your phone or tablet to pray with throughout this month.

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How is Christ the cornerstone of your life and relationships?
- ❖ How can you bear good fruit in your school and extracurricular activities?



October 4, 2020

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #139A

Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalms 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20

Philippians 4:6-9

Matthew 21:33-43

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Jesus uses another parable to teach the chief priests and elders another lesson the truth about God. In this passage, tenants do not want to return the land and its profit to the landlord when he sends his servants and son to collect the harvest. They kill all those the landlord sends because of their greed and selfishness. We are challenged to be good tenants of what God has given us by using our gifts and talents to produce a rich harvest and good fruit. This will help to build up the Kingdom of God.

Q FOCUS: *When we think of others and put their needs above our wants, we bear good fruit.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On October 7 we celebrate Our Lady of the Rosary. Pope Pius V instituted this memorial in gratitude for the military victory over the Ottoman Empire's efforts to gain territory in Europe in the sixteenth century. Many people had been enlisted to pray the Rosary for a military victory, so the Blessed Virgin was credited with a military victory and preservation of Christian kingdoms. The Rosary is a special intercessory prayer. In it, we acknowledge Mary's important role in salvation history and ask Mary to pray for us. It celebrates the mysteries of salvation, helping us to recall Christ's Incarnation, ministry, death,

and Resurrection. October is traditionally known as the month of the Rosary.

Church Teaching Connection

"Today, there is an inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbor of every individual, without exception, and to take positive steps to help a neighbor whom we encounter, whether that neighbor be an elderly person abandoned by everyone, a foreign worker who suffers the injustice of being despised, a refugee, an illegitimate child wrongly suffering for a sin of which the child is innocent, or a starving human being who awakens our conscience by calling to mind the words of Christ, 'As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers or sisters, you did it to me' (Mt 25:40)" (*Gaudium et spes*, 27).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 21:33-43

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: "Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the

tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.' They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?" They answered him, "He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures: / *The stone that the builders rejected / has become the cornerstone; / by the Lord has this been done, / and it is wonderful in our eyes?* / Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Tenants are people who lease or rent property from the owner of the land in order to live on the land. In our modern world, tenants are more likely to be people who rent houses, apartments and condominiums from an owner of those properties. However, in Jesus' time of farming and agrarian business, tenants rented land as well. The tenants are living on the land of another man, who has grown and tended a vineyard to produce fruit. When it is harvest time, the tenants will not allow the man's servants or his son to gain access to the land and to the fruit of the vineyard. They have an extreme reaction to the landowner's rightful requests—they kill his servants and

his son. The tenants are acting greedy and selfish. Instead of doing what is right and what they most likely agreed to in their leasing contract, they choose to do something wicked to serve their own benefit.

► **Has there been a time when you chose to do something out of selfishness or greed? In general terms, describe the incident. How did you seek forgiveness?**

Selfishness and greed can become idols that we choose to worship. We might think that looking out for ourselves is most important. However, in so doing, we forget that our faith teaches us to care about the sick, the poor, the hungry; to think of others and to place their needs over our wants. Instead of being selfish, we are taught by Jesus that we are to be selfless. By the example of Jesus' life and ministry, we learn that the "self" is least important and that the "other" is most important. Our culture sometimes exhibits the opposite of Jesus' teaching, but the parable of the tenants warns us what can often happen in our world when self becomes more important than others—greed and selfishness can tarnish a person and lead them to do awful things.

► **How can you combat selfishness and greed in your life? What can you do to help keep your focus on others, instead of the self?**

Jesus uses this parable to show living a life that produces fruit is the kind of life worth living. We produce fruit when we speak kind words to others, offer help and care to others, and share our gifts and talents with our families, school and wider communities. We are called to live this kind of a life, and if we do, then the Kingdom of God is ours. We are helping to build it up here on earth. However, if we do not produce fruit, then we will be hurting the growth of the Kingdom of God and our relationship with Christ and others.

► **How can you produce fruit in your everyday life? How does this help to build up the Kingdom of God?**

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 38.

The tenants in today's parable choose to act selfishly and greedy.

Jesus teaches us that we must be selfless not selfish.

Those who follow Jesus' teachings, who are merciful, loving and forgiving, are the ones who bear fruit in our world and build up the Kingdom of God.

Act on the Word

The Rosary

You will need enough rosaries for each young person to have one and take it home with them. You can purchase these from a religious supply store or ask your parish office if they have ones the teens can use. Also, obtain and provide the teens with a pamphlet on how to pray the Rosary.

In celebration of the month of the Rosary, spend some time discussing the Rosary and pray it with the group. Distribute the rosaries and pamphlets. It might help to also find a "how-to" guide online and display it for everyone to follow along with during this session. Briefly describe the different mysteries to the students and what parts of salvation history each one recalls. Practice saying the Rosary together, in full. Enlist the students to help in leading each of the decades. Show them how to move their fingers along the beads. Encourage them after class to talk about the experience with their parents or grandparents. Many grandparents have a deep devotion to the Rosary. This experience can help to bridge the generational gap and inspire a deeper connection between them.

Bearing Good Fruit

Bring in some recent newspapers, magazines, or allow the students use of smartphones and tablets during class.

Divide the teens into pairs or groups of three. Instruct each group to find a current news story that is uplifting and demonstrates the goodness of others. Emphasize that they should be looking for stories that combat greed, selfishness and negativity. Explain to the young people that so much of our mental energy is consumed by negative news stories and the 24/7 news cycle. All too often, the stories of good and selfless people do not make the headlines. Encourage the teens to find those stories. Once they have located the stories, invite each group to present on how that particular story combats greed and/or selfishness and promotes the common good. Discuss as a large group.

Closing Prayer

Lord,
you have provided a vineyard for us to cultivate.
Help us to till your soil and plant your seeds.
May your harvest be one of peace, justice,
and truth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.