



Today we celebrate 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time. In today's Gospel the landowner sent servants many times to collect the produce of the vineyard. But each time the servants were killed. The servants represent the prophets of the Old Testament who suffered for preaching the Word of God by being killed violently. Then the landowner sent his son, Jesus, who was also killed. The landowner took the vineyard from those tenants and gave it to other tenants. The vineyard in the parable is the Church, and so when the vineyard is taken from those tenants and given to others it is a symbolic way of saying that the Church would consist not just of the chosen people, the Jews, but would include all peoples.

But what does the parable mean for us today? If the vineyard is the Church and we are the tenants, then God wants us to give him produce from his vineyard, the Church. God sent his Son Jesus, but God did not stop communicating with us then. From time to time God continues to send us reminders to encourage us to collect the produce from the vineyard, the Church.

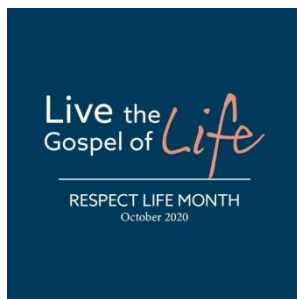
As individuals we strive to produce fruit for the Lord, a heart given only and totally to him. As a Church we strive to guard the deposit of the faith. In these efforts for the kingdom Paul's advice to the Corinthians in our second reading today is also good for us. *"Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6-7)*

Today's Gospel reminds us that in the Old Testament, God sent servants, his prophets, and then sent his Son, Jesus. God continues to send messages to us, to call us to produce fruit from the vineyard. If we accept these events found to be authentic by the Church, it seems that God is sending many servants to us in the last number of years asking us to produce fruit from the vineyard. In the Gospel of John Jesus says, "I chose you from the world to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last." (John 15:16)

What better way to conclude than once again remembering the words of Paul to the Philippians in the second reading: *"Fill your minds with everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise." (Phil 4:8)*

Next Sunday Bishop Sweeney will visit our parish and celebrate 9:00am mass.

Live the Gospel of Life



Each October the Church in the United States celebrates Respect Life Month, and the first Sunday of October is observed as Respect Life Sunday. As Catholics, we are called to cherish, defend, and protect those who are most vulnerable, from the beginning of life to its end, and at every point in between. During the month of October, the Church asks us to reflect more deeply on the dignity of every human life. . This year's theme is "Live the Gospel of Life".

Twenty-five years ago, Pope St. John Paul II wrote that the Gospel of life is at the *heart* of Jesus' saving message to the world (*Evangelium vitae* 1). In taking on human flesh, dwelling among us, and sacrificing his very life for our redemption, Christ reveals the profound dignity of *every* human person. This God-given dignity does not change with our stage of life, abilities, level of independence, or any other varying circumstance.

Rather, it is rooted in the permanent fact that each of us is made in the image and likeness of God, created to share in the very life of God himself. The human person is a "manifestation of God in the world, a sign of his presence, a trace of his glory" (EV 34). And we must reflect this truth in how we act and how we treat one another.

The truth of the Gospel of life is at the foundation of who we are as followers of Christ. In his earthly life, Jesus provided the perfect model for how we are to love our neighbor and live out the Gospel call: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40).

***"to imitate Christ
and follow in his footsteps"***

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Jesus calls each of us to "care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible" (EV 87). The Gospel of life is intrinsic to the whole Christian life and foundational to the decisions we make on a daily basis. For, "the Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a *single and indivisible* Gospel" (EV 2, emphasis added).

In his encyclical on the Gospel of life, Pope St. John Paul II recognizes the full range of threats against human life, from poverty and malnutrition to murder and war. He places particular emphasis, however, on threats to life at its beginning and end—precisely when it is most in need of protection. In modern times, children in their mothers' wombs and those approaching the end of their lives are certainly among the "least of these" in our world's estimation. Practices such as abortion and assisted suicide tragically reject the truth that human life is always to be cherished and defended with loving concern.

As the Church celebrates the 25th anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II's prophetic encyclical, let us reflect on how we personally live out the Gospel: *Do I talk about and act towards others as I would talk about and treat Jesus himself? Do I inform myself of the Church's teachings and engage in the civic arena as first a follower of Christ? Do I support and advocate for laws and policies that protect and defend human life? Do I help pregnant and parenting mothers in need? Am I ready to support a loved one nearing death?*

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, may Our Lord grant us the grace to truly and courageously live his Gospel of life.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI: "We are not some casual meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary."

We must continue to hope and pray that one day everyone will recognize the precious gift of life that God has given us and to treat it with respect and dignity.