Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time — October 8, 2023

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

The parable in the gospel from St. Matthew this weekend is quite clear. The house holder is God. The servants are the prophets. The son is Jesus. The story has to do with the hardheartedness or sinfulness of the people. Later in the gospel, Jesus exclaims, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you!" Jesus, God's beloved son receives the same treatment as the prophets who had preceded him. The prophet's messages fall on deaf ears. To the degree that the prophets are heard, they are rejected.

The story of Jesus, however, has a different ending to it. The rejected one has become the cornerstone in the new foundation.

St. Matthew's insight clearly reflects that of a Christian community after the resurrection. The crucified one has been vindicated, and the gospel, is now being preached to the Gentiles as well. St. Matthew understands the parable as referring to Jesus, Jesus understood in the light of the resurrection. Yet the heart of the parable is about servants of the Lord and the servant par excellence all murdered by the people.

What is it that leads people to respond to God's messengers in this way? Would you respond differently? Not much has changed. Injustice and violence mark the response of the tenants, most dramatically evident in the treatment they give to God's only son.

Why are injustice and violence such characteristic responses? And has much really changed? Are we any different from the rotten grapes of the prophet Isaiah's vineyard or the tenants in St. Matthew's parable? We would like to think so. But why do we continue as a people to support or tolerate nuclear arms buildup? Why are innocent people being shot? Are we less violent? Would we not do the same as the tenants in the gospel to someone who challenges us forcefully to live justly? Why does the call to justice disturb and threaten us so?

Both St. Matthew and the prophet Isaiah are teaching us about hardness of heart and ingratitude to God. We may well prefer not to see ourselves in the texts. Yet we are there. So much of the Bible and the teaching of Jesus long to turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. God, the compassionate one, longs for us to be compassionate as God is. Why should compassion be so difficult? Why are our immediate responses so often selfish and hostile? What is it in us that makes us proud of being tough?

We need compassion. Compassion is not weak. It takes strength. Compassion is not foolish. It reflects wisdom. God longs for us to be compassionate because compassion will save us. Compassion keeps us human.

We need not be like the tenants in the parable, rejecting the word of the Lord. Today we can allow ourselves to hear that word and act accordingly.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**October 10**	**11:00AM**
Elliott Avery (birthday)		Lolo & Lola
Wed.	**October 11**	**11:00AM**
Tony Jacob †		Bernas Family
Thur.	**October 12**	**11:00AM**
Gloria Subocz		Lee Montesano
Fri.	**October 14**	**11:00AM**
Thanksgiving		
Sat.	**October 15**	**4:30PM**
Banaga Family		Bob† & Lydia
Sun.	**October 16**	**9:00AM**
People of the Parish		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
Manuel Morales †		Your Children

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