

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Let me sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.
He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice
vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine
vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge
between me and my vineyard.
What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not
done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild
grapes?

And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the
clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness, but behold, an outcry!

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

The vineyard of the LORD is the house of Israel.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
It stretched out its branches to the sea;
to the River it stretched out its shoots.

The vineyard of the LORD is the house of Israel.

Then why have you broken down its walls?
It is plucked by all who pass by the way.
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,
devoured by the beasts of the field.

The vineyard of the LORD is the house of Israel.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore;
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the stock your right hand has planted,
the son you have claimed for yourself.

The vineyard of the LORD is the house of Israel.

And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name.
Bring us back, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine forth, and we shall be saved.

The vineyard of the LORD is the house of Israel.

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE PHILLIPPIANS

Brothers and Sisters: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise: think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practise these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Alleluia, alleluia.

I chose you out of the world, says the Lord,
that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide.

Alleluia.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

At that time: Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, ‘Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence round it and dug a wine press in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants and went into another country. When the season for 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 at first. And they did the same to them. Finally, 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 threw 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 stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes”? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.’

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

The vine in the garden, which was planted by Fr Kenny in 1990 had, for the first time in at least 30 years after this hot summer, grown grapes which had ripened on the vine. We had to be careful as they are poisonous to dogs and Leah the spaniel eats gooseberries,

raspberries, tomatoes probably would eat grapes and we could not take the chance. This is the season for grape picking in Southern Europe which matches the gospels. from them.

I had great patience and respect for Fr Kenny's gift despite its shortcomings. Almighty God too has great patience, the meaning of this gospel parable does not end here, God will continue to guide us patiently through the Holy Spirit, Jesus tells his disciples at the last supper (Chapter 16) he had more things to tell them but it would be too much for them now.

Jesus echoes the words of the prophets, warning that generation of disaster if they refused to accept God's message and just trusted in their own ways staying away from the change of heart to trust in the one God, Israel lost control of its land to the Babylonians (modern Iran) and was now a Roman province, kept in place to bring in tax revenue.

This message at a deeper level is inspirational, It is never just up to us. God never gives up. His son has given us the way, the truth and the light, Paul recognised this and told the new Christians of Philippi to rejoice in their trust, believers in Jesus Christ will be the ones living in the Kingdom of God.