

People Progress

Sunday Community

8 Oct, 2023

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Elizabeth Whelan

Welcome, Fr Paul!

Reflection: by Sheila and Rob Barrett

We thought it would be useful to begin with part of a reflection by Father Paul Scalia on today's gospel, as it gives us an interesting insight into this passage from scripture.

'Scripture is full of the commands 'remember' and 'do not forget'. The Ten Commandments likewise begin not with a commandment but with a reminder: 'I am the Lord your God.' After all, if we forget that truth then we should not hope to keep the commandments. The parable of the wicked tenants presents Israel's tragic failure to remember. The parable's landowner represents God, and the vineyard he built is Jerusalem or Israel in general. The tenants – Israel's leaders – fail to remember that he was the One who made their vineyard. They had, as Isaiah warned, forgotten the God of their salvation. We face the same danger as the wicked tenants. When forgetfulness creeps in – when we forget that it is he who made us and redeemed us – we begin to view ourselves as independent from him. We fall into a false sense of self-sufficiency. We grow to resent his commands as inconveniences, intrusions and violations of our autonomy. His messengers become annoying to us, and we dismiss them.'

It is worth emphasizing the importance of remembering in Jewish thinking and culture, as Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi says:

'Jewish memory is a fusion of past and present. Memory is not just a mere recollection of the past that preserves a sense of distance, but it is a reactualisation, a means to act in the present...Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of redemption.'

Father Scalia reminds us that the tenants, Israel's leaders, failed to remember that he, God, is the one who made their vineyard. Isaiah demonstrates the incredible love God had for his people, through the image of the vineyard, and this is made so vividly clear in the details he uses. God lavished his love and care on his people, expecting that they would respond to his love in the way they lived their lives: 'He expected it to yield grapes, but sour grapes were all that it gave.'

After their failure to remember and respond to God's love, there is particular poignancy in the question Isaiah puts into the mouth of God: 'What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?' How important it is for us to remember always that everything we have is a gift from God, and we should use these gifts with love for God and each other.

In the gospel Jesus takes the image of the vineyard and focuses on how the leaders of Israel have not come up to God's expectations, they have not remembered that God is the one who made a covenant with them: 'I will walk among you, I will be your God and you will be my people.' (Leviticus 26:12) It is striking to see how, the chief priests and the elders, in condemning the wicked tenants, when they say, 'He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the produce to him when the season arrives', are, in fact, condemning themselves. Not only have they not remembered what God has done for them, they are so much in denial of their own failings, that they cannot discern the truth that Jesus is putting before them. Also, they do not realise that the landowner's son, included by Jesus in the parable, is Jesus himself. The unconditional love of God for his people is shown in the way he sends his son to them. This may remind us of what John says in chapter three of his gospel:

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.' Further on in John's gospel Jesus brings the image of the vineyard into a New Testament, a new covenant context, when he says:

'I am the true vine, my Father is the vine dresser. He removes any of my branches which are not bearing fruit and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit to increase its yield. Now, you have already been pruned by my words. You must go on growing in me and I will grow in you. For just as the branch cannot bear any fruit unless it shares the life of the vine, so you can produce nothing unless you go on growing in me. I am the vine itself, you are the branches. (John 15: 1-5)

There is so much here for us to meditate on, but one line that stands out for us is, 'You must go on growing in me and I will grow in you.' These words help us to see that our union with Jesus is a life-giving relationship which goes on growing. We would like to conclude this reflection with a poem by Benet Conroy FSC. It speaks of a yearning that God will accomplish in our lives, something totally transforming. It recognises that without our union with Jesus we can achieve very little.

Take my little twig and grow a tree through me;
My single snowdrop can become a grove,
My sentence blossom to a book.
Transform my single string into a cello.
That tiny note I try to sing
May it become a four-part choir.
My scrape of bow you make a symphony.

That single dot of paint
Transform into a masterpiece
The blob of clay mould to a stately pot.
Take my candle, start a lighthouse.
Take my torch and light a city.

Take my e-mail start a network.
Take my smile and give a million hugs.

But in my heart I know
Unless it's you
I am condemned to finger paint,
To pat cold clay,
And plink upon the keys.
Give me a chord or two
For in that chord the heart will show;
Not mine but yours.

Readings:

Today: Isaiah 5.1-7 Psalm 80 Philippians 4.6-9 Matthew 21.33-43
Oct 15: Isaiah 25.6-10 Psalm 23 Philippians 4.12-14, 19-20 Matthew 22. 1-14

The Liturgy schedule:

Date	Planner(s)	Priest
Today:	Sheila & Rob Barrett	Fr. Paul McAuley
Oct 15	Lindsay & Bill Watson	Fr Ron MacDonell
Oct 22	Sharon McCarthy	Fr Jack Costello
Oct 29	John & Mary MacMillan	Fr. Ron MacDonell

This schedule, as always, is flexible. Planners, feel free to switch if you cannot do a liturgy on the scheduled date. Just be sure to tell the People Progress Reporter, so that we all know. Also, please notify PP early in the week (by the Tuesday before) if you cannot do a reflection.

People Progress Schedule

Oct: Elizabeth Whelan erwhelan@icloud.com
Nov: John MacMillan
Dec: Maryanne S-J and Roberto J
Jan: Mary Lou Jorgensen-Bacher

Please send your submissions to the People Progress Reporter by Thursday evening. People Progress welcomes new reporters. Thanks, Elizabeth.

Announcements:

• **Financial Situation:** Over the last week, we received more than we spent. We now have \$680.04. Our bank balance shows \$880.04, but two of our priests have

not cashed their cheques (from Sept. 24 and Oct 1), so I'm giving you our fully paid position.

John

• **From Brian Halferty:** (Updated) September 10th began our annual year of Sunday Community liturgies, which will continue right through to the end of June 2024.

NOTE that we are scheduling ONE SUNDAY PER MONTH as a Hybrid Liturgy, to be celebrated in-person at the school, Msgr Fraser Annex, but with a Zoom connection for those who are farther away or unable to attend in person. Our next Hybrid Liturgy will be on October 15th

• **Egg cartons:** Please continue to save your empty egg cartons for Elizabeth Stocking. She welcomes cartons and flats. You can deliver them to Elizabeth Whelan's house, and Elizabeth Stocking will pick them up. She thanks everyone who has contributed them.

October Birthdays. Happy Birthday to

1 John Corrado	7 Marjie Calla
2 Matthew Dunbar	18 Molly Sutkaitis
2 Ann Murphy	18 Roswita Zgraja
2 Barbara Podgorski	19 Tedd Dillon
5 Kate Jackson	19 Dwyer Sullivan
5 Sylvia Skrepichuk	23 Adam Branston

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Re-printed weekly for reference:

Duties of liturgy planners for virtual masses:

Early in the week before the liturgy:

- Call or email the priest to confirm Sunday's liturgy (contact info provided).
- Prepare or find a Reflection and send it to the People Progress reporter by Thursday. Please notify the People Progress reporter early in the week if you cannot do a Reflection.

- Select readers for the 1st and 2nd readings. Check with Sylvia Skrepichuk re: psalm

On the Sunday of the virtual mass:

- Greet the group (Ask newcomers to introduce themselves)
- Give a brief introduction to the liturgy.
- Read your passage or be prepared to do a reading (if a volunteer is unable to log-in)
- Thank everyone who 'attended' and those who helped (at Announcements)