

Mt 21:33-43; Isa 5:1-7; Phil 4:6-9 The Stone Rejected

Behold God's crazy love for us on that cross!

God owns the vineyard. He did everything to prepare it for the chosen people so they could bear much fruit.

But like the first reading says, they turned their backs on God, to a life of sin. They produced sour grapes (Isa 5:2).

They brought punishment upon themselves: The Assyrians and later the Babylonians conquered them. But God doesn't give up on them. And God will never give up on us.

God sends His messengers—the prophets. But they reject them and kill them. Then God has the crazy idea to send alone, His only son, Jesus Christ. And Him, they crucify.

Who would do such a thing? Nobody. Except a crazy vineyard owner who wants so badly to save His people, that He is willing to do anything and risk everything for them. He doesn't act like a businessman.

He acts more like a desperate parent...who is willing to say or do anything...to reach out to a wayward son or daughter... because He loves them so much!

Seems crazy. But that is how much God loves you.

Jesus knows the religious leaders are plotting to kill Him. So, He asks them: *what will the owner of the vineyard do?* (Mt 21:40).

By their response they condemn themselves: *He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease the vineyard to other tenants* (Mt 21:41).

That is what we do every time we sin: we condemn ourselves.

But something wonderful comes our way! God's love and mercy go way beyond the strict demands of justice. Otherwise, we would all end up in hell.

Jesus says, *Did you ever 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!* (Mt 21:42; quoting Ps 118:22).

Why? Because by His death He brought redemption. By the tragedy on that cross He gave us life. And when Jesus rose from the dead, God sent Him back to us!

So, the stone that was rejected, Jesus Christ, became the cornerstone that gave us life!

That is the crazy, radical, unlimited and everlasting, love of God for us on that cross! That is God sacrificing Himself for us to give us life!

And how should we respond? With the stone that was rejected, Jesus Christ, now inside of us!

We have a calling. Because when we were baptized, when we were confirmed, and especially when we come up to receive the Holy Eucharist; the stone that was rejected, Jesus Christ, comes alive inside of us.

And with that blessing comes an obligation...the obligation is to bear good fruit...the good fruit that gives glory of God. That means so much more than just coming to mass, living a holy life, and avoiding sin.

To begin, we have to grow in our personal relationship with Jesus who said, *I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit* (Jn 15:5).

How do we remain in Him? St. Paul advises us to pray. Give thanks to God for everything. Then ask Him for your needs and for the needs of others (Phil 4:6).

The amazing thing is this: if we can do that, then we will find peace in Jesus Christ--a peace that will protect us from all anxiety and worry (Phil 4:7). Can you believe it? Believe it!

Then, St. Paul says, we should imitate him (Phil 4:9). And by that He means imitate Jesus Christ. Because a person of prayer should be a person of action.

Like St. Ignatius of Loyola said, *pray as if everything depends on God, and act as if everything depends on you.*

So, stand up for what is true and right. Be kind, loving and gracious with the love of the One who was the kindest, most loving and gracious person who ever lived.

Remember the woman brought to Him in adultery, how He forgave her. Remember Zacchaeus, the tax collector, how Jesus loved him, forgave him, and transformed him.

Remember when Jesus nailed to that cross (by our sins) said, *Father, forgive them, [for] they know not what they do* (Lk 23:34).

That was Jesus saying to those sinners, and to us: *You are better than that. Now receive God's love and mercy and change your lives.*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, we can see and feel the crazy love God has for us on that cross...

Give us the grace we need to respond with the stone the builders rejected...You Jesus Christ alive—now and forever--inside of us!

Pro Life Sunday

Today, is Pro Life Sunday.

In the United States we have 1,200,000 abortions each year and that means 100,000 children die each month. Are those deaths reported on the news? Do we hear “stop the killing?” No we don’t.

So what can we do? Let’s pray for the mothers and fathers facing this horrible decision that they may choose life for their child.

Let’s pray for the women who have had abortions and suffer depression and guilt, sometimes for the rest of their lives.

And let’s pray for politicians that the Holy Spirit may awaken in them God’s truth that abortion is not a matter of choice because human life begins at the moment of conception.