

LITURGY & LIFE
THE EMMAUS JOURNEY

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Cycle A

A Catholic Update Companion to the Sunday Readings

ENTRUSTED TO BEAR FRUIT

Receive the vineyard • Welcome the Son • Bear the fruit of the Kingdom

1: FOR THE HOMILIST/PCL OR OCIA CO-ORD.: CHRIST SPEAKS - WE LISTEN

Sunday Readings

READING	SCRIPTURE
First Reading	Isaiah 5:1–7
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 80:9, 12–16, 19–20
Second Reading	Philippians 4:6–9
Gospel	Matthew 21:33–43

The Heart of This Sunday's Gospel

THE VINEYARD BELONGS TO ANOTHER

A landowner carefully prepares a vineyard and entrusts it to tenants. When harvest time comes, they reject his servants and kill his son, acting as though the vineyard were their own. Jesus exposes the danger of receiving God's gifts while refusing God's rightful claim. Our lives, faith, abilities, relationships, and responsibilities are entrusted to us so that they may bear the fruit of the Kingdom.

The Liturgical Thread

Isaiah sings of a vineyard lovingly prepared by God that produces wild grapes instead of justice. Psalm 80 asks the Lord to restore His vine. Saint Paul describes the interior soil of a fruitful life: prayer, thanksgiving, peace, and attention to whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, and worthy of praise. Jesus then reveals the deepest tragedy: the tenants reject not only the servants but the beloved Son. Christ, rejected by the builders, becomes the cornerstone of a fruitful people.

THE MOVEMENT OF THE READINGS

God prepares the vineyard → God seeks justice and fidelity → The Son is rejected → A faithful people bears Kingdom fruit

Listening With the Heart

Listen

Read Matthew 21:33–43 slowly. Notice how carefully the owner prepares the vineyard, how patiently he sends his servants, and how tragically the tenants respond to his son.

Reflect

What has God entrusted to you? Where are you tempted to behave as though His gifts belong only to you? What fruit is God seeking from your life?

Pray

Thank God for the gifts, relationships, responsibilities, and opportunities you have received. Ask forgiveness for using them without reference to Him, and ask for grace to welcome Christ, the beloved Son.

Rest

Remain quietly with Jesus, the rejected stone who has become the cornerstone. Allow Him to become the foundation upon which your life is built.

Carry This Word

MATTHEW 21:43

“The Kingdom of God...will be given to a people that will produce its fruit.”

2: FOR THE CATECHIST: THE CHURCH TEACHES - WE LEARN

Catechetical Focus

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHURCH

The Kingdom of God is God’s saving reign made present in Jesus Christ. The Church is its seed and beginning, not its owner. Through Word, sacrament, communion, and mission, the baptized receive the vineyard as a sacred trust and are called to bear fruit in holiness, justice, mercy, reconciliation, stewardship, and evangelization.

Catholic Update Resources

PRIMARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C8009A | What Is “the Kingdom of God”?

This Update clarifies that the Kingdom is not merely heaven, a political program, or a synonym for the visible Church. It is God’s saving reign inaugurated in Christ, already present among us and awaiting fulfillment. It provides the theological lens for Jesus’ demand that the vineyard produce the fruit of God’s rule.

SECONDARY CATHOLIC UPDATE

C8505A | What Does It Mean to “Be Church”?

This Update moves participants from “going to church” toward becoming a people gathered by Christ and sent in mission. The Church receives the Gospel, sacraments, authority, and ministries as gifts held in trust. To be Church is to cultivate the vineyard together and return its fruit to God through worship, communion, service, and witness.

The Catechist’s Companion

Key Teaching

God entrusts His Kingdom to a people who receive Christ and bear the fruit of faithful discipleship.

Session Aim

Help participants understand the Kingdom of God, the Church’s relationship to that Kingdom, and the responsibility of every disciple to use God’s gifts for His purposes.

Formation Objectives

- Explain the vineyard imagery shared by Isaiah and the Gospel.
- Describe the Kingdom of God as God’s saving reign.
- Identify Jesus as the beloved Son and rejected cornerstone.
- Distinguish ownership from stewardship.
- Name one gift or responsibility that can bear greater fruit.

Integrating This Week’s Catholic Updates

C8009A clarifies what the Kingdom is: God’s saving reign made present in Christ. C8505A clarifies who the Church is called to become in service of that Kingdom: a people gathered, nourished, and sent to bear fruit. The Kingdom cannot be reduced to a human program, and the Church must never treat grace, truth, authority, or ministry as private possessions.

Expand the Conversation

- What does the owner’s careful preparation reveal about God?
- What is the difference between possessing the faith and receiving it as a trust?
- What fruit does God seek from the Church today?
- What is the difference between “going to church” and “being Church”?

Common Misunderstandings

- The parable must not be used to support contempt for the Jewish people or a simplistic replacement theology.
- The Kingdom of God is not identical with the visible Church, though the Church is its seed and beginning.
- The Kingdom does not mean only heaven; it begins wherever God’s saving will is received through Christ.
- Bearing fruit does not earn salvation; it is the response of grace received and cooperated with.
- Authority in the Church is stewardship and service, never ownership.

Church References

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 541–546; 551–553; 763–769; 781–786; 849–856; 874–879; 897–913; 1803–1832; 2402–2406; 2820. Scripture connections: Isaiah 27:2–6; Matthew 7:15–20; Matthew 13:1–52; John 15:1–17; Romans 11:13–24; 1 Corinthians 3:5–11; Galatians 5:22–25; 1 Peter 2:4–10.

OCIA Connection

OCIA participants may first understand Church membership as attending Mass, accepting teachings, or completing initiation. This Sunday expands that vision. Through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, disciples receive new life, the Holy Spirit, the sacraments, the Word, communion, and a share in Christ’s mission. Formation therefore asks not only, “What will I receive from the Church?” but also, “What is Christ entrusting to me for the life of the Church and the world?”

Catechist’s Insight

PASTORAL CARE

Begin with the generosity of the owner, who prepares and protects the vineyard before asking for fruit. Responsibility arises from gift; grace comes before harvest. Avoid presenting the parable as proof that God rejected the Jewish people. Its warning applies directly to every generation of the Church, calling us away from possessiveness and toward humble stewardship.

The warning of the parable applies to the Church herself. Those who receive much can still become possessive, self-protective, or resistant to God. Keep the order clear: gift before demand, grace before fruit, relationship before accountability. Help participants name fruit concretely—holiness, justice, mercy, evangelization, reconciliation, generosity, and service.

3: FOR THE CANDIDATE/CATECHUMEN: THE DISCIPLE RESPONDS - WE LIVE

Living the Gospel This Week

- What vineyard has God entrusted to me?
- Which gifts do I treat as though they belong only to me?
- Have I welcomed Christ as the cornerstone of my decisions?
- What fruit is visible in my relationships and use of resources?
- Whose suffering or outcry is God asking me to hear?
- How can my parish participation bear fruit beyond the parish walls?

Choosing to Be an Intentional Disciple

WHAT IS CHRIST ASKING OF ME TODAY?

Which gift entrusted to me must begin producing fruit for someone else?

Every gift carries a mission. Knowledge can become teaching. Experience can become accompaniment. Resources can become generosity. Suffering can become compassion. Time can become presence. Authority can become service. Faith can become witness. The question is not whether the disciple possesses impressive gifts, but whether those gifts are becoming fruitful for others.

Holy Habit

THE STEWARDSHIP EXAMEN

At day's end ask: What did God entrust to me today? How did I receive it? Whom did it serve? What fruit did it produce? Where did I act like an owner rather than a steward? Conclude: "Lord Jesus, You are the cornerstone. Order my gifts and responsibilities according to Your Kingdom."

Faith Into Practice

- Use one skill to assist someone without seeking recognition.
- Give time to a parish or community ministry.
- Perform one work of mercy.
- Examine whether a ministry has become "my ministry" rather than Christ's.
- Respond concretely to one injustice or human outcry.
- Invite someone to participate in parish life.
- Read John 15:1–17 and ask what fruit Christ desires to cultivate in you.

Personal Reflection

If God came seeking the harvest of my present life, what fruit would He find? What fruit does Christ desire to cultivate in me now?

4: FOR THE SPONSOR: THE CHURCH SENDS - WE WITNESS

Sponsor's Path of Accompaniment

Share Your Faith	Share about a time when you realized that a gift God had given you was not meant only for you.
Walk Together	Ask: "What gift do you sense God has entrusted to you?" Explore how that gift might serve the Church or the wider community.
Pray Together	Read John 15:1–8. Ask Jesus to keep both of you rooted in Him and to make your lives fruitful in holiness, justice, mercy, and service.
Experience the Church	Explore one parish ministry as an expression of the Church bearing fruit. Ask what gift the parish has received and what fruit the ministry seeks to produce.
Continue the Journey	Each person names one gift to place at the service of others and takes one concrete step before the next meeting.

Faith at Home

Create a simple household "Vineyard Table." Place grapes, a small plant, or an image of a vine near the prayer space. Each person writes on one side of a paper leaf, "What has God entrusted to me?" and on the other, "What fruit can this gift produce?" Share the responses and pray: "Lord, help our home bear the fruit of Your Kingdom."

Parish Life

Ask whether parish life is producing the fruit Christ desires. Are the sacraments leading people toward holiness? Are newcomers welcomed, the poor served, young people formed, and ministries developing disciples? Choose one area in which the parish can move from maintenance toward greater fruitfulness.

Go Forth This Week

Receive every gift as a trust, root it in Christ, and let it bear fruit for the Kingdom.

Prayer for the Week

Loving Father, You have planted the vineyard and entrusted it to Your people. Everything I possess has first been received from You. Forgive me when I act as an owner rather than a steward, resist Your messengers, or use Your gifts only for myself. Teach me to welcome Your Son, Jesus Christ, the stone rejected by the builders who has become the cornerstone. Root my life in Him. May my thoughts become truthful, my choices just, my heart merciful, and my service fruitful. Let Your Kingdom grow

within me and become visible through me. When You seek the harvest, may You find the fruit of faith, hope, love, justice, holiness, and generous service. Amen.

Emmaus Insight

The vineyard bears fruit when the disciple remembers that every gift belongs first to God.