

# Theme of the Week - Produce fruit

Jesus came to share the Good News and to bring God's message to all people. He wanted them to learn how to live in the love of God and one's neighbour, and to know what mattered most in life. Many people did not listen, so Jesus told them that he would give his message to others. In the 1<sup>st</sup> reading on Sunday, Isaiah writes an allegory (a poem or story that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning) for the people (Judah) of the time. Judah turns a deaf ear to the pleadings of the prophets for moral reform. Judah does not choose what is right to do but does what is right for them.

Paul's letter to the Philippians (the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading from Sunday) is drawing to an end, and the fear of persecution is always close - even for Paul, who urges his readers to pray and not worry. In Paul's letter, we see the idea that even in struggles, God is the answer and whom we should trust. These two readings add some richness to today's Gospel.

The Gospel offers a blunt allegory or parable of the blindness of those who have been appointed leaders of God's people. Aimed at the chief priests and scribes who do not carry out the will of God, the ones who will later cause the execution of Jesus just as the renters kill the land - and the owner's son! Jesus again uses the vineyard to consistently portray the kingdom of God, and listeners understood the intensive long-term care that was required to be fruitful and profitable. Walled, to discourage grazing animals, well appointed, but needing constant work, pruning, thinning, supporting the vines, irrigating etc. This is the Kingdom of God and the renters took this land for themselves, just as Judah in the first reading did when they did what was right for them.

Jesus later in the Gospel goes further in his teaching when he speaks of the most important stone that the builders (the chief priests and scribes) have rejected. This refers to the keystone, the one at the very top of a Roman arch, which held all the other stones in place. The implication of the Gospel is clear: the kingdom will be taken from those who refuse to accept God's messengers and son, and given to those who have faith in Jesus. The renters have taken the land for themselves and go on to kill the landowners son. The chief priests at the time are those who are controlling God's kingdom for themselves and later go and execute his son, Jesus! What does Paul say - even in struggles, have faith in God.

Prophets are often unpopular because they bring messages that are uncomfortable and challenging. Who are the prophets of the present age, and what are they telling us? How have we received their messages and what have we done about them? What is the message the world most needs today? The message of today's Gospel too is blunt and we should reflect on how we have received it, Jesus calls himself the 'keystone' or most important stone that supports the rest of the building. What have been the 'keystones' in your life in the past and the present? What are the things which you have rejected, and why? Think about being fruitful in your life, and think about three specific ways you can be fruitful during the week. Jesus is the messenger and he brings us the good news. Let us act out this good news with others around us.

# Produce fruit

Weekly Reflections  
8<sup>th</sup> October 2023



## A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (21:33-43)

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'Listen to another parable. There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard; he fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower; then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When vintage time drew near he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number, and they dealt with them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them. "They will respect my son" he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, "This is the heir. Come on, let us kill him and take over his inheritance." So they seized him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They answered, '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.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone.

This was the Lord's doing and it is wonderful to see?

'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'

## Prayer for the Week

Dearest Lord, Not only have you given us your kingdom, you have also given us the Keystone in your son and the sacrifice of his death for our salvation. Continue to allow us to deepen our faith and show it to others so they too can grow in faith

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

## Feast Day - Denis and Companions



9<sup>th</sup> October 2023

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Denis was sent as a Christian missionary from Italy to Gaul. He set out with his companions, Rusticus and Eleutherius for Roman Paris and settled on the Ile de la Cite, an island in the Seine. Denis, known as the first bishop of Paris, made many conversions among the Gauls, but the pagan priests were alarmed by his success. The three Italians were taken to the highest hill in Paris, now Montmartre and beheaded. Legend declares that Denis picked up his severed head and walked two miles, preaching all the way. It is believed the name - Mount of Martyrs - derives from this event.

He was

**Intentional and  
Prophetic**

### Day 1

In today's Gospel, Jesus uses yet another parable to outline how we should care for the Kingdom of God and have faith in him.

Why do you think people of the time turned away from Jesus and did not accept the message of what mattered most in life?

Do this happen today?

### Day 2

Why is the keystone so important? What will happen if it is taken away?

Why is Jesus and the message he gives us so important and what will it mean if we don't follow the word of Christ?

Think about how you can be fruitful to others but ensuring the keystone (Jesus) is at the centre on those decisions - see the fruit you can bear from those decisions and how much joy will come of these

### Day 3

#### The Mysteries of Light

During this day please pray the Rosary as we enter the Lord's public life through his teaching and miracles