***LSW***

children

## The song of the vineyard

Is 5:1-7

Let me sing to my friend

the song of his love for his vineyard.

My friend had a vineyard

on a fertile hillside.

He dug the soil, cleared it of stones,

and planted choice vines in it.

In the middle, he built a tower,

he dug a press there too.

He expected it to yield grapes,

but sour grapes were all that it gave.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,

I ask you to judge between my vineyard and me.

What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?

I expected it to yield grapes.

Why did it yield sour grapes instead?

Very well, I will tell you what I am going to do with my vineyard:

I will take away its hedge for it to be grazed on,

I will knock down its wall for it to be trampled on.

I will lay it waste, unpruned and undug;

overgrown by the briar and the thorn.

I will command the clouds to rain no rain on it.

Yes, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts

is the House of Israel,

and the men of Judah, that chosen plant.

He expected justice, but found bloodshed.

Year A

### Twenty-seventh Ordinary Sunday

**Image**

God love us

**Points to note**

This is very vivid parable and is very much an allegory. In fact, Matthew has amended Mark’s version to fit it more into the history of Israel. Details can be found in the adults leaflet. Role-playing should work very well with this reading and it would be quite fun, too.

**Liturgy**

# Acclamation before the Gospel

Alleluia! Alleluia!

I call you my friend, says the Lord,

because I have made known to you

everything I have learnt from my Father.

Alleluia!

Gospel

*(optional) Have a missal at hand and read the first reading informally as an introduction (Is 5:1-7). Explain that this is a love ballad about God’s love for us. Read it slowly as a piece of poetry and paint a picture of God’s love lavished on his vineyard. This imagery is very important to depict God’s sadness at the actions of the tenants in the Gospel reading.*

Before the Gospel reading, explain to the children what is an allegory: it is a story where each character and action represent something or someone. Tell the children that this parable is an allegory very much like the one we had last week and you would like them to identify whom the characters in the parable represent.

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with your spirit.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew

*All:*  Glory to you O Lord

(Mt 21: 33-43)

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner, who planted a vineyard, fenced it round, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went abroad. When harvest time came, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his rent. But the tenants seized the servants, thrashed one, killed another and stoned a third. Next he sent some more servants, this time a larger number. And they did the same thing to 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 wicked people to a wicked end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will deliver the rent 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 fruits.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Discussion**

So, who were the various people in the story? The owner represents God; the tenants, the chief priests and the elders of the people; the servants, the prophets; and the son, Jesus who was killed outside the walls of Jerusalem. Who is the vineyard? Be prepared to explain why a thing here is used to represent people. Go back to the first *reading, if necessary. The vineyard represents Israel, which God has entrusted to the priests to take care. The grapes from the harvest represent the love and worship that the people were due to give to God.*

*Read the reading again and interpret it as you go along with the events of the history of Israel. At the end of it all, the children should understand that we are the object of God’s love and God does get very sad and upset if those he has assigned to watch over us do not do their job properly.*

**Context from the first reading**

This parable is more an allegory. The first reading for this Sunday gives a description of the vineyard. Here, it represents the Chosen people. The owner represents God; the tenants, the chief priests and the elders of the people; the servants, the prophets; and the son, Jesus who was killed outside the walls of Jerusalem.

Mt expanded on Mk’s conclusion to emphasise the eschatological aspects of the parable.

An interesting feature of the parable is that under Jewish law, three successive failures by the owner to claim his share of the harvest gives the tenants a case for claiming the vineyard as their own. The case would be strengthened in practice, but not in law, if there is no heir to the property. Hence the three attempts at murder.