

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jun 3rd 2013

The image that Jesus uses, the vineyard of the Lord, is one that his hearers would be familiar with; the principal Old Testament site for this is Isaiah 5, but Hosea 10, several passages in Jeremiah, and some in Ezekiel all use the same idea. Jesus changes the image, however, to add the sharecropping caretakers who become the object of wrath instead of the grapes (as in the Old Testament).

What does this passage mean to us today? How does it apply to the Church, both in the members and in the hierarchy?

I believe that what Jesus has added is quite simply that God is putting the care of his people in our hands. This is a sign of his respect for us and of his hope in us, but he does not expect us to build the Church or even to give him praise and service under our own initiative and power: Jesus gives us the Spirit to remind us of what he said and to give us the ability, encouragement, and strength to do so.

So the question then becomes what sort of a Church God is hoping for us to build. I would say that it is a Church in his own image, one of Good News, of healing, of forgiveness, and of loving service to all but especially to those who feel like the least and the most lost.

And the final question, one each of us must answer, is what kind of a Church each of us is creating for God ...

Chas Kestermeier, S.J.