

# FAITH AND REASON

**Human fraternity and care of creation form the sole way towards integral development and peace:** Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning! In today's Gospel passage (Mt 21: 33-43) Jesus, foreseeing his passion and death, tells the parable of the murderous vintners, to admonish the chief priests and elders of the people who are about to take the wrong path. Indeed, they have bad intentions towards him and are seeking a way to eliminate him. The allegorical story describes a landowner who, after having taken great care of his vineyard, had to depart and leave it in the hands of farmers. Then, at harvest time, he sends some servants to collect the fruit; but the tenants welcome the servants with a beating, and some even kill them. The householder sends other servants, more numerous, but they receive the same treatment. The peak is reached when the landowner decides to send his son: the vine growers have no respect for him; on the contrary, they think that by eliminating him they can take over the vineyard, and so they kill him too.

The image of the vineyard is clear: it represents the people whom the Lord has chosen and formed with such care; the servants sent by the landowner are the prophets, sent by God, while the son represents Jesus. And just as the prophets were rejected, so too Christ was rejected and killed. At the end of the story, Jesus asks the leaders of the people: "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" And, caught up in the logic of the narrative, they deliver their own sentence: the householder, they say, will severely punish those wicked people and "let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons". With this very harsh parable, Jesus confronts his interlocutors with their responsibility, and he does so with extreme clarity. But let us not think that this admonition applies only to those who rejected Jesus at that time. It applies to all times, including our own. Even today God awaits the fruits of his vineyard from those he has sent to work in it. All of us.

In any age, those who have authority, any authority, also in the Church, in the People of God, may be tempted to work in their own interests instead of those of God. And Jesus says that true authority is when one performs service; it is in serving, not exploiting others. The vineyard is the Lord's, not ours. Authority is a service, and as such should be exercised for the good of all and for the dissemination of the Gospel. It is awful to see when people who have authority in the Church seek their own interests.

Saint Paul, in the second reading of today's liturgy, tells us how to be good workers in the Lord's vineyard: that which is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and honored; that which is virtuous and praiseworthy, let all this be the daily object of our commitment. I repeat that which is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and honored; that which is virtuous and praiseworthy, let all this be the daily object of our commitment. It is the attitude of authority and of each one of us, because every one of us, even in a small, tiny way, has a certain authority. In this way we shall become a Church ever richer in the fruits of holiness; we shall give glory to the Father who loves us with infinite tenderness, to the Son who continues to give us salvation, and to the Spirit who opens our hearts and impels us towards the fullness of goodness...***Pope Francis emphasized this after the Angelus on Sunday, 4 October, as he spoke about his new Encyclical inspired, like its precedent, by Saint Francis.***

**We commonly and loosely use the words "Joy" and "Happiness" as synonyms.** But strictly speaking, their meanings are different. Happiness is a feeling that arises from pleasure, quickly changes, and varies along our day-to-day emotions.

Joy, on the other hand, signify something richer, according to Catholic spiritual writings:

It is intense, ecstatic, and higher than mere happiness....

A state of one's heart, being, and soul, which is the center of self....

An outcome of one's communion with God....

Complete sense of happiness and fulfillment in life....

One of the fruits of Faith, Hope, and Charity: When you possess these 3 theological virtues, one result is that of total joy. A fruit of the Holy Spirit that helps us endure trials and sufferings with a deep sense of peace resulting from being in a state of grace and living in God.

**Goodness and Mercy to All:** The Catholic Church, lifting high, by means of the Second Vatican Council, the torch of religious truth, intends to show herself as the loving mother of all, benign, patient, full of goodness and mercy, so also to the brothers who are separated from her. To mankind, oppressed by so many difficulties, the Church says as Peter said to the poor man who begged for alms: "I have neither gold nor silver but what I have I give you; in the name of Christ of Nazareth arise and walk"

... **Pope John XXIII**

**Everything is joy.** But we Christians are not very used to talking about joy, about happiness. I think that we often prefer complaints! What is joy? The key to understanding this joy is in the words of the Gospel: 'Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit'. The One who gives us joy is the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit himself who guides us. He is the author of joy, the creator of joy, and this joy that is in the Holy Spirit gives us true Christian freedom. Without joy we Christians cannot become free. We are enslaved to our sorrows. Pope Paul VI said: "it is impossible to carry the Gospel any further with sad, dejected, disheartened Christians. It is impossible". This is a somewhat funereal attitude. Joy, on the contrary, comes from praising God. But what does praising God mean? Praising him freely, just as the grace he gives to us is freely given. Do you praise God? Or do you only ask God and thank God? Doing this, means "going out of ourselves to praise God, 'wasting' time in praise". If you do not praise God and do not know the freely given gift of 'wasting' time in praising him, then of course the Mass seems long! But if you go to it with this joyful attitude, praising God, it is beautiful. Moreover, "eternity will be this: praising God; but it will not be boring, it will be wonderful"! It is she, the Virgin Mary, who brings joy.... We must pray to Our Lady that in bringing Jesus, she gives us the grace of joy, of freedom, the grace of praise. That she gives us the grace of praising freely .... for he is worthy of praise for ever... **Pope Francis, Holy Mass Santa Marta (Zephaniah 3: 14-18, Luke 1: 39-56)**

#### **Advent Bible Verse For the Day**

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Luke 1:46-47</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Isaiah 35:10</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Numbers 24:17</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Luke 24: 34-36</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 20:15</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Isaiah 9:6</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalms 72:18</b>

**Reflection:** To see and to believe is not difficult. However, believing without seeing is only possible when one is deeply convinced of the existence of an omnipotent God. Thus, faith becomes the heroic part of our life.... Do I have this faith? Taking pride in one's virtue without piety is an abomination in God's eyes. All sacrifices, and acts of devotion are vain if those who practice them lack compassion for their neighbor. The most essential thing is missing love. I am the temple of God. This means not only great dignity, a fullness of grace and blessing, but also a fullness of responsibility. I am the temple of the living God, nothing profane must be in me. What things, therefore should I Put away from my heart that God may dwell in me?

**The Bread for Lovers:** If human love craves oneness, shall not divine love? If husband and wife seek to be one in the flesh, shall not the Christian, Christ pray for the oneness with one another? Every heart seeks a happiness outside itself, and since perfect love is God, then the heart of man and the heart of Christ must in some way fuse. This aspiration of the soul for its ecstasy is fulfilled in the Eucharist... **Bishop Fulton Sheen**

**Be a Person of Prayer:** If you would suffer patiently, be a person of prayer. If you would gain power and strength to overcome the temptations of the enemy, be a person of prayer. If you would overcome the lust of your will, be a person of prayer. If you would understand the cunning devices of Satan and defend yourself against his deceits, be a person of prayer. If you would drive out troublesome gnats of vain thoughts and cares from your soul, be a person of prayer. If you sustain your soul with the richness of devotion and keep it full of good thoughts and desires, be a person of prayer. If you would strengthen and confirm your heart... on a pilgrimage with God, be a person of prayer. If you would root out from your soul all vices and in their place plant virtues, be a person of prayer. For in this way you receive the anointing and grace of the Holy Spirit, who teaches all things.... **St Bonaventure**

**In His Will is Our Peace**  
**Fr. William C. Mooney**

**Spiritual Direction and Confession**  
**Email: [Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com](mailto:Fr.WCmooney@gmail.com)**  
**Appointments: (904) 824-6625**  
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