

Readings for the week of October 8, 2023

Sunday:

Is 5:1-7/Ps 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20
(Isaiah 5:7a)/Phil 4:6-9/Mt 21:33-43

Monday:

Jon 1:1—2:2, 11/Jon 2:3, 4, 5, 8/Lk 10:25-37

Tuesday:

Jon 3:1-10/ Ps 130:1b-2, 3-4ab, 7-8/
Lk 10:38-42

Wednesday:

Jon 4:1-11/Ps 86:3-4, 5-6, 9-10/Lk 11:1-4

Thursday:

Mal 3:13-20b/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6/
Lk 11:5-13

Friday:

Jl 1:13-15; 2:1-2/Ps 9:2-3, 6 and 16, 8-9/
Lk 11:15-26

Saturday:

Jl 4:12-21/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12/Lk 11:27-28

Next Sunday:

Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (6cd)/
Phil 4:12-14, 19-20/Mt 22:1-14 or 22:1-10



Gospel Meditation

Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

Jesus' parables are much stranger than most people realize. This week is an attention-getting example. He tells the religious leaders a parable about a completely absurd situation. Blood-thirsty and insane tenants violently abuse and kill the servants of their landlord. Inexplicably, the owner keeps sending them more victims of increasing value — up to and including his own son. Weird.

Usually, we hear this parable and assume it's an allegory: Jesus is the murdered son, the servants the prophets, etc. Fair enough. But notice — and here is where the weirdness deepens — Jesus seems to *disagree* with the Pharisees' interpretation that the landowner should and will punish the inheritance-obsessed murderers. So, is Jesus praising the psychotic and greedy murderers?! You can imagine the furrowed brows and deriding laughter as the scoffing crowd shuffles away.

If we stay with this tough parable, perhaps this truth emerges: God wants us to have an over-the-top obsession with a *totally undeserved inheritance*. Of course, we are forbidden to use violence. But the parable's violence gets our attention because it highlights the crazy goodness of the landowner. Jesus reveals that God is not merely in the business of rewarding the good and punishing the bad. He is playing a much stranger game — one marked by a kind of over-the-top mercy, a breathtaking giving of what is *not* deserved. What would our week look like if we embraced this kind of desire for God's kingdom on earth, even if others think we're nuts? This week let's seek God's kingdom with a passionate confidence in God's desire to give the good things we don't deserve.

— *Father John Muir*



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(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

The Gift that Gives Back

It never ceases to amaze me how often I fall into the trap and end up grumbling about the greatest gifts in my life. A husband, children, a life that is full almost to bursting: these are things for which I once begged God. These are the jewels in the crown of my life.

Oh, but the children need care. Constant care. And a husband — a real flesh-and-blood creation of God, entrusted to me by God, to help me be holy and relying on me for holiness in turn — well, that relationship is a lot of work, isn't it? And a "full life" — I laugh to think of it, and then I blush with shame, because I admit sometimes, I do yearn for a life that is a little less ... *full*. A full life can leave you awfully tired at the end of the day.

I would imagine it's the same for everyone, no matter your life circumstances or vocation. Your greatest blessings are also those things that require much of you, more than you imagined you would ever be asked to give. The biggest jewels make the crown heavy.

But if we had any of these gifts without the effort it takes to maintain them, would they be half as sweet?

In this same way, the work of the vineyard is opened to us through baptism; we are given the chance to produce fruit for the kingdom. It's a chance we never dared to dream would be given to us.

It's a gift. But just like with any gift worth having, it requires effort. Upkeep. Work.

It requires that we give in return. And it's the giving that somehow, mystically, transforms us. It's the giving that turns into the gift itself.

"...the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit." — Matthew 21:43

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

Why do we do that? Catholic Life Explained

Question:

How can a priest counsel people about marriage when he has never been married?

Answer:

If a marriage counselor is in a bad marriage does that mean that he or she will be a bad counselor? If one's counseling ability depended upon first-hand experience, would that require counselors to be perfect before they can help others? Obviously not. Some of the skills necessary to help others do come out of personal life experience. But you don't need personal, first-hand experience in order to understand something. We would not think that a doctor, who is an oncologist, would not be able to treat cancer because he himself has never been sick. We also would not expect every doctor to treat cancer. It is the same with priests.

Essentially marriage is a relationship and we've all been involved in different kinds of relationships: in our family, with our friends, and with God. And so counseling people about marriage is really helping them to look at the issues that really are part of their relationship, finding ways to better understand themselves in relationship to one another and in relationship to God. In many ways a priest's training, background, and experience, as well as his personal knowledge of many different relationships in families and couples, gives him a broad background from which to draw upon. Most priests are quite capable of helping couples prepare for marriage and discussing the issues that are important as they begin their life together. And they do not do it alone. With the help of married couples and specially trained counselors, most parishes offer a very good preparation for the sacrament of marriage.

Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures:
The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone...?
Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.” - Mt 21:42ab, 43

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Questions of the Week

Invite Parishioners to Reflect and Respond to Scripture

First Reading

The prophet Isaiah uses the metaphor of a vineyard to express God’s anger with Israel. How do you communicate your displeasure with a loved one?

Second Reading

Paul teaches the Philippians that prayer and a positive attitude is key to settling our anxious hearts and minds. What have you been anxious about this week that using Paul’s advice could help?

Gospel Reading

In the parable of the tenants, Jesus harshly criticizes the chief priests and elders of Jerusalem and traps them with their own judgment. How well do you accept legitimate criticism?



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“
BEGIN
NOTHING
ON EARTH
UNLESS
IT HAS
ITS END
IN HEAVEN.
”
- ST. CHARBEL MAKHLOUF

PRIEST OF LEBANON