27th Sunday in Ordinary Time – October 4, 2026

There is one simple truth at the heart of Jesus' Gospel today that I think all of us needs to be reminded of from time to time:

Everything in life is a gift from God.

Our life is a gift. Our families are gifts. Our abilities, and opportunities and faith are gifts. All that we have, including the years of our life – long or short are all gifts. And if we accept this premise, that everything is a gift – then ultimately, we aren't the owners.

We are stewards of what God has entrusted to us. That is the mistake the tenants make in Jesus' parable. A landowner plants a vineyard. He prepares it carefully, tends it, protects it, and then entrusts it to tenants. He expects them to care for his vineyard and, in time, to produce a harvest. But somewhere along the way, the tenants forget that the vineyard does not belong to them. And perhaps that is where this Gospel begins speaking directly to us – because we can forget too.

We naturally speak about *my life, my time, my money, my career, my house, my family, my plans.* Parents probably hear something similar when a teenager announces, "It's my life. I'll decide what I'm going to do with it!" And parents instinctively know there is something incomplete about that way of thinking – but all of us can fall into the same trap. We work hard. We build careers. We raise families. We pay mortgages. We save for retirement. We make sacrifices. And all of that can be good and responsible and important. But the Christian must go one step further and say, "What I have built still rests upon what I was first given. Life itself was given to me. My abilities, the people I love, the opportunities I have, even my faith – were given to me. Everything is gift.

Fr. Chris' Homilies

Friends, even this parish we worship in is a gift. St. Bernadette's does not belong to me, and it doesn't belong to you. It belongs to Christ. We all belong to God. He has simply entrusted this little corner of His vineyard to us for a time. And every one of us has other vineyards. Your marriage and family may be part of your vineyard and the relationships within that too. Our friendships, our work, our health – all vineyards we must tend to and care for. And caring for a vineyard involves toil – so even the struggles we carry are part of what God has entrusted to us. Which leads to the second important truth in the Gospel: The owner eventually comes looking for fruit – God wants to see us do something with the gifts He has given us.

So, the question isn't simply, *Have I avoided ruining the vineyard?* The question is: What am I producing with what God has given me?

It is possible to say, "I'm Catholic. I go to Mass. I went to Catholic school. I made my First Communion. I was confirmed." All those things matter, of course – but we are asked to go deeper.

What is my faith producing **in me**? If we're young, is your faith making you kinder at school? More willing to include someone others ignore? Strong enough to make a good choice when our friends are making a different one? Parents, is your faith shaping the example you give your kids? Do they see that Sunday Mass matters a lot – or is it something they just accept we do? Do they see you forgiving, praying, serving and being generous?

Those of us who have lived the faith for many years should ask: after all these years, am I becoming more forgiving? Gentler? More compassionate? Less judgmental? More generous? Of course, I have to ask myself those questions too.

Fr. Chris' Homilies

What God desires is not perfection – it's conversion – daily work in the vineyard of our lives. Little by little, the vineyard of our lives should be producing the things Jesus asks of us – love, joy, mercy, generosity, patience, forgiveness, courage and compassion. And we don't produce that fruit by ourselves.

The landowner eventually sends his son – God we know has done the same. He has given us the greatest gift of all — Jesus our Lord.

Jesus is the cornerstone. Apart from Him, we can't become the people God created us to be. Our lives bear fruit when we remain close to Him and allow His grace to change us.

So perhaps this week we reflect on two things:

- What has God entrusted to me?
- What am I doing with it?

Because everything in life is a gift. And one day, the Lord will ask what became of all that He placed into our hands.

May He find that we did not simply possess His gifts but cherished them, cared for them, shared them — and, with Christ at the centre of our lives, allowed them to bear beautiful fruit for Him.

Fr. Chris' Homilies