Homily/Fr. Chris

October 4, 2026, 11a Mass

Today Jesus gives us the parable of the vineyard—a story that is both beautiful and unsettling. The landowner lovingly prepares the vineyard with care: he plants, protects, nurtures, and entrusts it to tenants. This vineyard is not only Israel; it is the whole world, the Church, our families, our parish, and even our own hearts. Everything we have is a gift placed in our hands by God, who hopes we will cultivate it with gratitude and responsibility.

But the tenants forget that the vineyard is not theirs. They act as if they are owners, not stewards. Their violence, greed, and rejection of the son reveal what happens when human beings try to claim God's gifts as their own. This is the tragedy of sin: we misuse what God has entrusted to us.

This parable speaks powerfully to our call to respect life. Every human life—unborn or elderly, strong or fragile, familiar or foreign—is part of God's vineyard. Life is not ours to take, manipulate, or discard. It is entrusted to us. When society embraces violence, when the vulnerable are ignored, when the dignity of the human person is diminished, we repeat the actions of the tenants. We forget the Owner. We forget the sacredness of His creation.

The vineyard also reminds us of our responsibility toward the earth itself. Creation is God's first gift, entrusted to humanity not for exploitation but for care. When we pollute, waste, or consume without thought, we act like tenants who take without gratitude. Respect for life and respect for creation flow from the same truth: everything comes from God, and everything deserves reverence.

Yet the parable ends with hope. The rejected stone becomes the cornerstone. God never abandons His vineyard. Christ rebuilds what we have damaged. Today He invites us to be faithful caretakers—protecting life, honoring creation, and bearing fruits of justice, compassion, and peace. **St. Francis** of Assisi shows us what this looks like in practice. He saw every person as a brother or sister, every creature as a reflection of God's goodness, and the whole world as a sacred vineyard entrusted to our care. His reverence for life and creation flowed from a heart completely rooted in Christ, the true cornerstone.

May we receive this vineyard with grateful hearts, like St. Francis, and return to God the harvest He longs to see—lives marked by humility, care for the vulnerable, and deep respect for the beauty of His creation.