



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 8 October 2023

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

Today, the Gospel presents us with a dramatic parable that has a sad ending (cf. *Mt* 21:33-43). A landowner planted a vineyard and took good care of it. Then, needing to go away, he entrusted it to some tenants. When harvest time drew near, he sent his servants to collect his crop. But the tenants maltreated and killed them. So, the owner sent his son, and those tenants killed him too. How come? What went wrong? There is a message from Jesus in this parable.

The landowner did everything well, with love. He himself toiled to plant the vineyard. He surrounded it with a hedge to protect it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower (cf. v. 33). Then he entrusted his vineyard to some tenants, leasing his prized possession to them, thus treating them on an equal plane, so that his vineyard would be well cultivated and bear fruit. Given these circumstances, the harvest should have come to a happy end, in a festive atmosphere, with a fair division of the produce to everyone's satisfaction.

Instead, *ungrateful* and *greedy* thoughts insinuated themselves into the minds of the tenants. Indeed, there is always some ungratefulness at the root of conflicts, as well as greedy sentiments — wanting to quickly take possession of things. “We do not have to give anything to the owner. The fruit of our labour belongs to us alone! We do not have to be accountable to anyone”. This is

the reasoning of these labourers. And this is not true: they should have been grateful for what they had received and for how they had been treated. Instead, ingratitude gave rise to greed, and a progressive sense of rebellion grew within them, which led them to see the situation in a distorted way, to feel that the owner was in their debt rather than that they were in debt to the owner who had given them work. When they saw the son, they went as far as saying: "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance!" (v. 38). And they go from being tenants to murderers. It is a whole process. And many times, this process takes place in the hearts of people, even in our hearts.

With this parable, Jesus reminds us what happens when people deceive themselves into thinking that they are self-made, and they forget to be grateful, they forget the real basis of life: that good comes from the grace of God, that good comes from his free gift. When one forgets this gratitude to God, one ends up facing one's situation and limitations no longer with the joy of feeling loved and saved, but rather with the sad illusion of needing neither love nor salvation. These people stop letting themselves be loved and find that they are prisoners of their own greed, prisoners of the need to have more than others, of wanting to stand out over others. This process is ugly, and it often happens to us. Let us think about this seriously. Many dissatisfactions and recriminations, many misunderstandings and many feelings of envy arise from this. And, driven by resentment, one can fall headlong into a spiral of violence. Yes, dear brothers and sisters, ungratefulness generates violence, it takes peace away, and makes us feel and yell when we speak, without peace, while a simple "thank you" can restore peace!

So, let us ask ourselves: Am I aware that I have received the gifts of life and of faith? Am I aware that I myself am a gift? Do I believe that everything comes from the grace of the Lord? Do I understand that, without merit, I am the beneficiary of these things, that I am loved and saved gratuitously? And above all, in response to grace, do I know how to say "thank you"? Do I know how to say "thanks"? Three words that are the secret to human coexistence are thank you, excuse me, sorry. Do I know how to say these three things? Thanks, excuse me, I'm sorry. Do I know how to say these three phrases? "Thanks" is a small word, "excuse me" is a small expression, saying I am sorry, "forgive me", is a small expression. It is what God and our brothers and sisters await every day. Let us ask ourselves if these small words, "thanks", "excuse me", "forgive me, sorry", are present in our lives. Do I know how to thank, to say "thank you"? Do I know how to say sorry, "forgive me"? Do I know how not to be intrusive — "excuse me"? Thank you, I'm sorry, excuse me.

May Mary, whose soul magnifies the Lord, help us make gratitude the light that dawns daily in our hearts.

After praying the Angelus, the Holy Father continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I am following apprehensively and sorrowfully what is happening in Israel where violence has exploded yet more ferociously, causing hundreds of deaths and injured. I express my closeness to the families of the victims. I am praying for them and for all who are living hours of terror and anguish. May the attacks and weapons stop. Please! And may it be understood that terrorism and war do not lead to any resolutions, but only to the death and suffering of many innocent people. War is a defeat! Every war is a defeat. Let us pray that there be peace in Israel and in Palestine.

During this month of October which, in addition to being dedicated to the missions, is also dedicated to praying the Rosary, let us not tire of asking, through Mary's intercession, for the gift of peace in the many countries throughout the world that are experiencing war and conflicts. And let us continue to remember dear Ukraine, which suffers greatly every day, and is so battered.

I thank all those who are following, and who are above all accompanying with prayer, the Synod that is currently underway, an ecclesial event of listening, sharing and fraternal communion in the Spirit. I invite everyone to entrust the proceedings to the Holy Spirit.

I greet all of you, people from Rome and pilgrims from Italy and from many parts of the world, in particular, the students and teachers from the Stigmatine Formation Center of Verona, and the Jesuits from various countries who are guests of the Saint Robert Bellarmine College of Rome. Many Polish people: I see many Polish flags here ... I offer my greeting to all of you and to the youth from the Immacolata.

I wish you all a happy Sunday. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*