

Thus they sinned and sin and death entered the world. God cursed them and cast them both out of the Garden of Eden. Adam was told by God, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food, until you return to the ground." (Genesis ch3 v17)

In Biblical times, wine and water were the main sources of refreshment. Vines are grown in all Mediterranean countries: they are a valuable crop and great care is taken in their cultivation. It can take several years before a harvest of grapes is produced to make wine. Vines have a deep root, which grows downwards seeking moisture from the soil. Vines will have a single stem and the side branches are trained along trellises, so that the grapes can develop well and be easily harvested. Vines are grown in rows and the spaces in between weeded.

-Jane Stilling.

Entrance antiphon: Your merciful love, O God, we have received in the midst of your temple. Your praise, O God, like your name, reaches the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with saving justice.

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10

Responsorial Psalm: 144. Response: I will bless your name for ever, O God my King.

Second Reading: Romans 8: 9. 11-13

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children. Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew: 11: 25-30

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed the man who seeks refuge in him.



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A, 2023

Weekly Reflection: 6) "I am the true vine" (Gospel of St John ch15 v1): This is the sixth and final illustration of the Person of Jesus in St John's

Gospel. Verse 1 reads in its entirety, "I am the true vine and my Father is the Gardener". God is described as the Gardener or Vinedresser of the vineyard (John ch15 v1), who "cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes, so that it will be even more fruitful" (John ch15 v2). God prunes believers and cuts away things that no longer bear the kind of fruit He desires believers to show. The "cutting away" is often painful and is not immediately understood but it is necessary for believers to grow into the fruit-bearing believers in Jesus Christ that He wants them to be. God is progressive and sometimes He needs to prune His people, as He leads them to higher places. Just as fruit does not grow apart from the vine, tree or plant to which it is attached, a believer in Jesus needs to stay in His Presence in order to grow or bear fruit. Also a believer needs to allow Jesus to take up residence in his or her life. The vine is the source and health for the fruit, so Jesus is the source of life. Time spent in prayer or reading the Word of God helps cultivate an ever-growing relationship with Him. The importance of remaining in the vine is emphasised: in John ch15 v6 it reads, "If any one does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."

God the Father is also seen as the Gardener in Genesis ch2, when He created the Garden of Eden and formed Adam and his wife, Eve, to live in it. It was a truly beautiful place with trees good for food and a river running through the garden, watering it. Adam was put to work in the garden by God and to take care of it but he was given one command: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die." (Genesis ch2 v16). Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit, she gave some to Adam and he ate it.