

## September 6, 2020: The XIII Sunday after Pentecost (The parable of the wicked tenants)

### Epistle: I Cor. 16:13-24:

*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation with my own hand—Paul’s. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed—O Lord, come! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

### Gospel: Matthew 21:33-44:



*Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to the vinedressers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to*

*them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said. But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’ Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”*

The gospel reading of this Sunday speaks about God, the Creator of the whole world (the *vineyard*) and the vinedressers, all human beings to whom God entrusted His creation.

The parable can be explained in the context of the history of the Old Testament, as well as of the New Testament. While in the Old Testament the *wall, the winepress and the watchtower* represent the Ten Commandments and the Temple; in the New Testament they represent the New Law and the Church, established by Christ.

The tenants (*vinedressers*) of God's *vineyard* are all those who, on the basis of either the natural Law, the Old Testament Law or the New Testament Law, are required to work responsibly and earnestly in order to acquire sufficient fruits for the harvest time. The time to acquire such fruits is here and now, in this life and the harvest time is the individual judgement and the last judgement as well.

God, in His infinite love for mankind invites and expects everyone to respond positively to this great privilege of working in His vineyard. So, those who mistreated or killed God's servants (the prophets of the Old Testament, even the Son of the Landowner, our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the Apostles and the thousands and hundreds of thousands of Christians) in order to illegally and violently inherit the vineyard have, in fact, *rejected the cornerstone*, Christ Himself, and *will be broken to pieces*.

Let us give thanks to God for His patience with us so that we can be honest and hard-working vinedressers and present the fruit of our labor at harvest time!

**Fr. George Bazgan**

## Sunday Service Attendance

**Due to the continuing State of Emergency, which limits the number of people attending Church services, we are asking our members to make sure that, for time being, only 1 (one) person from each family attend our Sunday Divine Liturgy.**

**We apologize for this inconvenience and hope that the restrictions will continue to be relaxed in the near future.**

**Those who attend, are kindly asked to observe the recommendations of the experts, such as: washing their hands, social distancing, etc.**

**Thank you all and may God keep us safe!**

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership as soon as possible.

This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations during the Summer months and for the rest of the year as well.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH!**

## **Prayer at the time of pandemic**

O Lord, our God, who are rich in mercy and, with Your wise care, guard our lives, listen to our prayer, receive our repentance for our sins, stop this pandemic, as You have ceased the punishment of the people in the days of King David. You who are the Physician of our souls and our bodies, give healing to those contaminated with this disease, hastily raising them from their bed of suffering, to glorify You, the Most Merciful Savior, and protect those who are healthy from any disease.

Bless, strengthen and shield, O Lord, with Your grace, all those who, with love of people and sacrifice, care for the sick at their homes or in hospitals. Remove all disease and suffering from the people and teach us to value life and health as gifts coming from You.

Grant us, O God, Your peace, and fill our hearts with unwavering faith in Your protection, with hope in Your help, and with love towards You and our neighbor.

For Yours is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we give glorify: Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen!