



Friday of the 2nd Week of Lent



Date: Friday, March 21, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Genesis 37:3–4, 12–13a, 17b–28a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 105:16–21 | **Response:** Psalm 105:5a

Gospel Acclamation: John 3:16

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:33–43, 45–46

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

The story of Joseph, cast into a pit by his brothers and sold for silver, is the story of betrayal. The parable of the wicked tenants, who kill the son in a desperate attempt to seize the vineyard, is the story of rejection. These stories are not simply echoes of human cruelty; they are shadows cast by the cross of Christ. They are the foreshadowing of the ultimate betrayal, the ultimate rejection—the moment when the Son of God is handed over, not by strangers, but by His own people.

Joseph's brothers were not monsters. They were men eaten away by envy, embittered by the sight of their father's favoritism. "Here comes that dreamer!" they sneered, as they plotted his downfall. How easy it is to justify wrongdoing when resentment takes root in the heart! And yet, what men meant for evil, God used for good. The boy thrown into a pit would one day rise to save the very brothers who betrayed him. And so, too, with Christ—the stone rejected by the builders becomes the cornerstone.

Lent is a season that strips away illusion, that calls us to examine our own hearts. Are we so different from the brothers of Joseph? Do we not, at times, let envy fester, let resentment harden, let self-interest cloud our judgment? Do we not also reject the messengers of God—those voices that challenge us, unsettle us, or demand conversion?

The psalmist recalls how the Lord sent a famine upon the land, testing His people, refining them as silver in the fire. But He also sent a redeemer, Joseph, to preserve life. The Gospel parable is a sharper warning: those who reject the Son

reject the very life God offers. The tenants in the vineyard believed they could claim what was never theirs. But the vineyard belongs to the Lord. We are but stewards. And one day, we must give an account.

This warning is not for the Pharisees alone. It is for us. It is for every time we close our eyes to the suffering of others, every time we cling to what is not ours to possess—our power, our privilege, our comforts—forgetting that all is gift. It is for every time we, too, fail to recognize the Son standing before us, disguised in the least of our brothers and sisters.

Zambia, like so many places in our world, bears the scars of inequality. Land and wealth are not shared justly. The voices of the poor cry out, but who listens? The tenants of the vineyard still believe they can hoard the harvest for themselves, turning away the rightful heirs. And yet, the Gospel reminds us: the vineyard will be given to those who will produce its fruit. This is both judgment and promise. Judgment for those who refuse to act justly. Promise for those who, like Joseph, endure suffering yet remain faithful, trusting in the slow but certain justice of God.

St. John de Brébeuf, the Jesuit martyr who gave his life preaching the Gospel to the Huron people, knew rejection. He knew what it was to offer the treasure of the Gospel and be met with hostility. Yet he did not waver. He did not seek vengeance. He sowed the seed of faith even as he suffered, believing that the vineyard belonged to the Lord.

While we keep Pope Francis in our prayers, we ask ourselves:

- Where do I see the spirit of envy or resentment creeping into my heart, distorting my vision?
- In what ways have I ignored or rejected the messengers God has sent into my life?
- How can I, this Lent, become a more faithful steward of God's vineyard, bearing the fruit of justice, mercy, and love?

Lent is a time to return to the Lord, to uproot what poisons the soul, to cultivate what gives life. May we not wait until the vineyard is taken from us. May we, today, choose to bear fruit that will last.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-03mar-21-yc-lt-02/>

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.