**October 2017 Weekly Bulletin Gospel Reflections (Suggestions)**

**“All it takes is one good person to restore hope” Pope Francis**

**Sunday 1 October, 2017 Matthew 21:28-31**

Who are we and how do we act as disciples of Jesus? Today’s Gospel reading is of two sons called by their father to go and work in the vineyards, one who says he will, but doesn’t; the other who said he wouldn’t, but then changes his mind. It asks us to reflect on our discipleship, to examine the way we live, the extent to which we act or just pay lip service to Christ’s teachings. If you are going to talk the talk, then you have to walk the walk.

“It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (*Laudato Si*, 217)

**Sunday 8 October, 2017 Matthew 21: 33-39a; 43**

The tenants in the Gospel story thought they were entitled to do what they were doing, that they had dominion over the vineyard. But it belonged first to the land owner who entrusted them to care for it and prepare an abundant harvest. What are the vineyards today that we have been asked to work in, to care for, to grow, to give back with increase to God?

“This sister [our common home] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air, in all forms of life. (*Laudato Si:* 2)

**Sunday 15 October Matthew 22: 1b-9**

As disciples of Christ, what feast or event of huge importance have we been invited to, or to pay attention to, but have not because we have been too occupied? Too self-absorbed? Not interested? Are we too busy to contemplate God’s beauty?

“The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. Saint Bonaventure teaches us that “contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God’s grace within our hearts, and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves”. (*Laudato Si*, 233)

**Sunday 22 October, 2017 Matthew 22: 15; 17-21)**

The Pharisees and the Herodians try to trap Jesus. In essence, they are attempting to set the stage for Jesus’ conviction of treason. They want to twist his words to use against him. As on other occasions Jesus does not fall into the trap. Instead, he tells his questioners to give the emperor what is due, and to give to God what is his, so we give to God our care for the poor and the vulnerable, and our common home. Pope Francis reminds us of the reverence with which St Francis regarded creation and that we too need to care for what belongs to our Creator.

“I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically – He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.” (*Laudato Si*, 10)

“He felt called to care for all that exists.” (*Laudato Si*, 11)

**Sunday 29 October Matthew 22: 34-40**

The Pharisees question Jesus again. When Jesus answers, the lawyer understands that all of the law and the demands of the prophets really came down to these two most important commandments. Everything is about love and relationship. How we treat others reflects the relationship we have with God. For Jesus it was not possible to love God and not reach out to the poor and the vulnerable, or to care for the earth and the whole of God’s creation.

“We must regain the conviction that we need one another; that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.

(*Laudato Si* 229)

‘God of love, show us our place in this world

as channels of your love

for all the creatures of this earth,

for not one of them is forgotten in your sight……

The poor and the earth are crying out.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light,

help us to protect all life,

to prepare for a better future,

for the coming of your Kingdom

of justice, peace, love, and beauty.

Praise be to you!

Amen Pope Francis’ Prayer “A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation”.