

Living the Word

Isaiah 5.1-7

The prophet gives us a stark impression of the ways in which we can sometimes fall short of what the Lord envisions for us in this passage, sometimes known as the Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard. There are plenty of reasons why we might not be as fruitful in our share of the soil of the faith that we have been given to till. But we must never lose heart, nor must we stop aiming for that plentiful harvest. It is certain that on the last day, we will be called to account for the lives we have led, and the use of the skills that are ours. Is the Lord calling you, or someone you know, to do more for the sake of His kingdom? Are we merely keeping things ticking over until someone else comes along, or are we really doing all we can with what we have?

Saints and Heroes

St John Henry Newman

This time last year we were rejoicing at the canonisation of St John Henry Newman. Friday 9th October is celebrated as his feast day, which was the day he became a Roman Catholic. Newman, before he converted to Rome, had a huge influence on the Church of England and particularly on the Oxford Movement. He had a brilliant mind, and was one of the greatest thinkers of his age. He was a prolific writer of letters, poems prayers and hymns; and it is his hymns such as *Lead kindly light*, *Praise to the holiest in the height* and *Firmly I believe and truly* which have become so familiar to us with wonderful words that have been set to fabulous music.

One of his famous quotes was '*to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often*'. May Saint John Henry Newman pray for us, and may his example and teaching help us to change day by day to model ourselves more on Jesus.

From the Fathers

What, I ask, is more wonderful than the beauty of God? What thought is more pleasing and satisfying than God's majesty? What desire is as urgent and overpowering as the desire implanted by God in a soul that is completely purified of sin and cries out in its love: I am wounded by love? The radiance of the divine beauty is altogether beyond the power of words to describe.

From 'Longer Rule' by Basil the Great, Bishop, 330-379.

4th October
2020

The Seventeenth
Sunday after Trinity
27th Sunday
of the Year

The Vineyard of the Lord



What happens when a tenant acts as if he owns the place and does not recognise the rights of the true owner? Trouble is sure to follow. In the first instance Jesus directs the parable to the Jewish authorities who had 'taken ownership' of the Law of God and were dealing with it to suit their own ends and prejudices. They had ceased to listen and learn in their relationship with God; they believed they were in possession of the final and ultimate truth. Most of us, however, are not much better. In our mind and heart, when we begin to occupy our place in the church and community of the Body of Christ, are grateful for the generosity of God in sharing his life with us. True, we are asked in return to pay a little rent in terms of worship, service and giving. Then slowly attitudes begin to change, we begin not to take so much notice of the preaching and teaching, our minds are made up about what we think is right and wrong. It becomes 'our church' and we become resistant to new demands and fresh challenges. Does this sound familiar? The parable is a warning: we don't want to find ourselves homeless do we?

