

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 1st 2024

God does not seek revenge

We have stories of victimisation today. In the first reading, Joseph is victimised and expelled by his own family. In the gospel, the owner's agents and his own son are rejected and murdered—the story refers to Jesus himself.

To the question raised by Jesus as to the reaction of the owner of the vineyard, the audience responds in terms of the “law of karma”—They want the evil men to be brought to an evil end. But Jesus disagrees. He speaks not of an-eye-for-an-eye but of entrusting the vineyard to more responsible people and of the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone for a new world!

Neither Joseph nor Jesus takes revenge; both become the cornerstones of the redemption of the very families that rejected them. This is why the Joseph episode was a mandatory reading for Easter in the early Syrian Christian liturgy.

The danger of chasing God's Son out of the vineyard continues today in our Church communities. Think of the challenges that confront the sacraments of marriage and family, debates on abortion, and many other issues – many in the Church prefer to follow the values of the world. Christ and his Gospel are regarded as outdated and old-fashioned, and many Christians choose to ignore them.

What is the result of throwing the Gospel out of our lives? There are wars, crimes, destruction of creation, despair and loneliness. This parable is addressed to us today. Open your eyes, recognise the Son, don't throw him out of the vineyard – out of our lives.

Bible Claret