



## Pastor's Corner

Dear Parish Community of St. Mel!

Today is Respect Life Sunday when we emphasize the dignity of human life from conception to natural death. As Catholic Christians, we re-dedicate ourselves to give witness to the Gospel of Life by word and action. The following reflection on today's readings comes from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Pro Life

Activities and is reprinted in its entirety.

"Sometimes our country seems like a vineyard which has gone to seed. Where once fertile hillsides and rich vines grew, we find nothing but wild grapes. Our country was founded on the belief that God had granted an inalienable right to life to every human being. Yet the easy accessibility of abortion on demand, our lack of concern for the elderly and those most vulnerable seem to be signs of a nation gone astray.

Such was the condition of Jerusalem in the time of the prophet Isaiah, when God asks them what he has done to deserve this sad state of affairs, and threatens to let the thorns and the briars take over this wild vineyard, where he looks for justice and sees only bloodshed.

Today's Gospel completes the analogy. Jesus tells the story of "the landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey." Of course, the tenants neglect the vineyard, but worse, when the landlord sends his servants and then his son to inspect the vineyard, the tenants kill his emissaries. "What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?" Jesus asks his disciples. It does not take a scripture scholar to figure out that they will be punished for their mismanagement of the talents which God has given them.

This is the reason why there is an urgency to the pro-life movement today. For there are doctors who have been given the gift of compassion and healing who have used their talents to abort babies. There are counselors who have been given the compassion to help those in distress, who urge people to choose to abort their child. There are parents to whom God has given the power to create life with him, who advise their pregnant daughter to get an abortion. There are caregivers for the elderly who refuse to respect their human dignity, and there are men and women in all sectors of society who refuse to use their talents for the promotion of the Gospel of Life.

In his letter to the Philippians today, Saint Paul gives us good counsel on how to promote the Gospel of Life. He advises that "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." May we commit ourselves to the protection of all human life from conception to natural death that this nation may, once again, be a land known for its honor and its love of the truth, guided by the God in whom we trust."

*Helmut Hefner*

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