

Lent Devotional April 1, 2026

Scripture

Mark 12:1-11

1 Then he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the winepress, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went away. 2 When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. 5 Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. 6 He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 7 But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ 8 So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this scripture:

*‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
11 this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes?’*

Devotion

The Rev. Anthony R. C. Hita '13

April Fools' Day reminds us of how easy it is to mistake one thing for another, to see mercy as foolishness, and wisdom in folly. In the parable of the Wicked Tenants, at first, the vineyard owner seems to be the fool. Any sensible person would have acted after the first offense, yet he continues to send servants despite escalating violence, until it finally claims his son. By sending multiple envoys without retaliation, the vineyard owner is demonstrating remarkable patience and grace, and even implying that if the tenants simply deliver the harvest and return what was entrusted to them, reconciliation is still a possibility.

Instead, the tenants show themselves as the actual fools by mistaking grace for weakness. They imagine they can exploit the owner's generosity by killing his son and seizing his inheritance—never realizing that they are destroying the very foundation of their livelihood. Their ambition exceeds their grasp; they fool themselves into believing they can become heirs through their own violent means, and in so doing, lose even the ability to remain workers.

Holy Week confronts this same ambition in us. Our foolishness is believing that we can seize, through our own cleverness or might, what can only ever be received from God as grace.

Prayer

Lord God of mercy and patient love, as we drive our world ever further away from Your ways, we inflict on each other greater injustice and pain. Yet, in Jesus, You have shown us a different, better way to love each other as You first loved us. Open our eyes that we may yet turn away from our self-destructive course and back to You. In Jesus' name, amen.