

In today's gospel, Jesus tells us a parable about a vineyard. In order to get insight to the story of the vineyard, let me tell you another story by the theologian, John Shea. It goes like this:

**The water of life,
wishing to make itself known on the face of the earth,
bubbled up in an artesian well and flowed without limit or effort.**

**People came and drank from this refreshing water
and were nourished and refreshed by it
Since it was pure and clean and invigorating.**

But people were not content to leave things in this state of Eden.

**Gradually they began to fence in the well,
Charge for admission
Claim ownership for the property around it
And made elaborate laws on who could come to the well.
Soon the well was the property of the wealthy and the elite.
They put locks on the fence.**

The new “owners” were so engrossed in their power systems of ownership

They did not notice that the water had vanished.

They continued to sell the non-existent water until a few people noticed that the water had gone.

But some dissatisfied people searched with great courage

And found a new artesian well

Soon that well was under the control of property owners

And the same fate overtook it as it had the first well.

The spring took itself to another place --- and this has been going on Throughout history. (paraphrased from a story of the theologian, John Shea)

The point of the story of the spring is the same as the story of the vineyard in today’s gospel.

The vineyard is like the well.

It has lovingly planted and prepared by God.

It is a gift given to us to be nourished and protected for all God's people

But some people become greedy and want it all for themselves.

They think THEY own it.

What will we teach our children?

How are we living our lives?

Is life something to be grasped at, or a gift to be shared?

Life is a gift.

(Our children are a gift.)

Every breath we take is a gift.

Do we treasure our and give thanks?

Are we willing to share freely the gift we have received?

What lifestyle do we choose---in our families, our parish, our country?

Are we grateful caretakers of what God has given us,

or are we greedy placing fences between ourselves and others to protect and cling to what we "own"?

How are we teaching our children?

We are tenants, not owners;

We are stewards of God's many gifts.

Let us not forget who we are.

We are servants of the One who came to serve all.

And when we act as servants, we are entering the very life of God.