Homily for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 2017
By Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS

We’re at this critical point in Matthew’s Gospel story. Jesus is at the Temple in Jerusalem. He’s talking with the chief priests and elders of the Jewish people. These are the leading people of the whole country of Israel. This would be like meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet today. Remember, Jesus was a layman, not ordained, elected or appointed. He was sent to no special schools, had no special training; he was standing on, speaking on, his own authority.

The Gospel story we just heard Jesus tell was probably never told in this form by Jesus himself.

The Gospel of Matthew was composed some 50 to 60 years after the death of Jesus. The writer/s of the Gospel trusted what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who gave the writer/s the "authority" to complete the story.

“He will leave the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper time."

Did you never read in the Scripture:
“The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone: by the Lord have this been done and it is wonderful in our eyes. Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

Now let’s bring this all up to right now.

Las Vegas shootings, 10 p.m. last Sunday 58 murdered, more than 500 wounded by a demented man.

This summer there have been two Category 4 hurricanes (Harvey and Jose) and two Category 5 hurricanes (Irma and Maria) in our hemisphere.

In Mexico City, there was a 7.1 earthquake, 225 dead.

In the midst of all that horror and devastation,
there were powerful acts of Christ-like love.

Here are some wise words from Pope Francis that tie together our readings about vineyards and the state of our world.

*Laudato Si'* Pope Francis

"[Our Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.

This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.

We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

"I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.

Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest.

Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions.

We require a new and universal solidarity.

All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents."

We have a compelling story to tell

Jesus has breathed the Holy Spirit into each of us, no exception.

Together, we have an immense array of gifts

The vineyard is being plundered. … We have the Spirit.

We come here to Eucharist week after week to be reminded of just how gifted we are.