

This Sunday we celebrate the Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The Gospel (*Matthew 21:28-32*) is another parable about working in vineyards. This time the owner has two sons. A grumpy son who says he won't work, but in the end he does go to the vineyard. And a slippery smooth-talking son who brightly says 'yes, I'll go' and then does nothing.

I sometimes find this parable very useful as a confessor. When work duties, family duties, caring duties start to weigh heavily on us, we can become grumpy, resentful, even angry. And there can be a lot of guilt locked up with these feelings.

The parable lifts that burden of guilt. It teaches us that what matters is what we actually do and not how we feel about it. It's the grumpy son who does the Father's will.

In an ideal world we would always do God's will with a light and happy heart. But in the real world it's not that easy. And there's more: it's when we get stuck in and do things for others when we **don't** feel like doing it, that we show great love and commitment to them.

Finally, note that this parable is addressed, not to the disciples, but to the elders and chief priests. That's because in the journey of St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has now arrived in Jerusalem and is beginning the confrontation with the authorities that will lead to his crucifixion, death and resurrection.