

Major league baseball has arrived at a crossroads in its history. I don't mean the retirement of George Brett, Nolan Ryan, and Arlington Stadium. This is the last year for playoffs and the World Series as we've come to know them. Next year, three divisions will compete in the playoffs, and a second place team will have a shot at the World Series for the first time in history. Purists are shaking their heads, wondering if this is still baseball. A new generation has taken over the game and changed the way we perceive its victors.

The owner of the vineyard in Jesus' parable, similarly has come to a crossroads. The people he originally hired have stolen his crop, beaten his servants, and killed his son. So he hands the vineyard over to another generation. Jesus tells the parable to the religious leaders of his day to warn them *they've* come to a crossroads. God had sent them prophets, but they did not listen. So now the vineyard of the Lord, the reign of God, will be given to a new generation, the Christians.

The change of ownership from one group to another is great news--if you're in the group that receives. But if your group loses, times are hard. In our church we saw this with the second Vatican Council. The Mass where so many found their faith suddenly went into the hands of new owners. It was great news for the church, but many people suffered. In our families, often the morals of children differ greatly from those of parents. At times in our lives we can all end up feeling like the people at the crossroads who first heard this parable: "Wait a minute!" they say. "What's happened here? Is this the same church I grew up in? Is this the same family? Is this the same company I joined? Is this the same God?"

We call God eternal, but that's as scary as it is comforting. It's comforting to know God is always there, but it's scary that he's there through some changes we may not like. It seems like God scorns tradition, because as generations change God stays in relationship with them. Ultimately comfort comes not from doing things the same way, but from deepening our relationship with God at the crossroads; he might be present where we didn't think he would be at all.