

The Song of God's Friendship

A summary of Father Andrew Mohl's homily
October 4, 2026

Father Andrew began by recalling his years as a high school chaplain in Baltimore, where he oversaw the preparations for the baccalaureate Mass. The seniors chose the readings, and one young woman selected an Old Testament passage about friendship. However, she omitted the final line - the part that connected friendship with God.

Father Andrew explained why that omission mattered:

"You more or less took the moral of the story away."

"Scripture said something about God, something about man, and something truthful about this relationship, and you skipped it."

He instructed her not to change anything else in the passage. Yet, when she read it at Mass, she again left out the last line. The celebrant responded by repeating its message six times:

"God is your friend. God is the friend of the human race."

For Father Andrew, this became a lesson about hearing the whole message of Scripture, especially its revelation of our relationship with God.

“See God in His marvelous deeds each and every day, and approach your neighbor in that way.”

That day, he explained, they sang “a song of friendship, a song of scriptural understanding between a God and His people.”

Turning to the day’s readings, Father Andrew said:

“The readings today are indeed songs.”

He described Isaiah’s song of the vineyard as a poem rooted in the familiar experiences of the people: planting, tending, protecting, and gathering a harvest.

“It celebrated the vineyards, the way of living, the landscaping, the labor, the care, and the experience of everyday living among the friendly and among the unfriendly.”

The song begins with the care given to the vineyard, but also confronts disappointment and wrongdoing. Father Andrew connected it with the autumn harvest and the remembrance of God’s care for His people during their forty years in the desert. These celebrations invite both gratitude and reflection on how people have responded to God.

At the heart of the vineyard’s story is the recognition that God alone gives and sustains life. Leaving Him out means missing the deepest meaning of the song.

“He and He alone can make all this happen.”

“And not to see that, or to leave that line out, would be a failure in the relationship of God and man.”

Yet God’s judgment must be understood alongside His enduring love and forgiveness:

“Marvelous is the knowledge and wisdom of God, whose love is unending for His people and His forgiveness constant.”

Father Andrew made that invitation personal:

“Go into the vineyard today and live that love.”

“For God, who knows you, loves you, protects you, and rebuilds that wall for you.”

Matthew’s Gospel takes up the vineyard image again. Father Andrew explained that Matthew, a Jew following Jesus, uses a story familiar to his listeners to help them recognize what God is doing through His Son.

God continues to call His people back, despite repeated rejection:

“Over and over and over, come to Me. Do not place anything before Me.”

The sending of the son into the vineyard reveals the depth of God’s generosity. Even the rejection and death of His Son do not end His love for us.

“The God of love died for you in abundance, so as to forgive your sins as He keeps this relationship unending.”

The rejected stone becomes the cornerstone. Through the Cross and Resurrection, what appears to be only human tragedy reveals God's saving love.

Father Andrew then returned to the celebrant who repeated the missing message six times. We, too, need to hear and repeat the truth of God's love, especially when we are discouraged or burdened by sin.

“Any time we doubt God's greatness, or look at life as despair, or think we are more sinful than the other, or that sin has made it impossible to rejoice ... we need to sing a song.”

“We need to sing the scriptural song, the baptismal song.”

Saint Paul also knew suffering, struggle, and the questions that arise when God seems difficult to find:

“Is this for real? Where is my God? I do not see. I did not hear.”

Yet Paul's prayer and experience lead him toward the peace that surpasses human understanding. Father Andrew invited us to follow that same path:

“Come close to Him. Acknowledge Him.”

Drawing on Paul's words, he encouraged us to dwell on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent, and worthy of praise.

“They are of God. Endless in justice and mercy.”

“Keep on doing this, for you have learned and received it, heard it, and seen it. Then the peace of God will be with you.”

That peace is meant to shape our daily lives and our relationships. Each day offers an opportunity to recognize God's gifts, reflect His friendship, and “walk in the encounter with His love.”

Father Andrew concluded by connecting the vineyard and its harvest with the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Nourished by God's love, we are sent to make His presence, peace, and forgiveness visible in the world:

“May we continue in this bread and wine and harvest of God's love, to sing this great tune - to go into the world, singing the song of our friend.”

Edited from the supplied automated transcript. Quotations retain its wording with punctuation and capitalization adjusted; “chaplain” corrects an apparent transcription error.