

October 8, 2017 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Lord, give us the courage to stand before your truth!**

Isaiah 5:1-7

Psalms 80:9,12-16,19-20

Philippians 4:6-9

Matthew 21:33-43

In the first reading Isaiah speaks of the vineyard that was given great care but produced no yield and compares this to the house of Israel. The people have not received justice and their outcry is heard by the Lord. The vineyard, a valuable resource, will be allowed to be overrun by thorns and briars and this points to the subsequent invasion of the Assyrians.



The Psalmist re-emphasizes this point and sees the vineyard, Israel, in ruin. With hope he pleads with the Lord for mercy that all may be restored and is confident that Israel will repent and not turn away from Yahweh again.

In the second reading Paul tells us to think only of things that are honorable, lovely, gracious, excellent, and worthy of praise. As a result God's peace will guard our hearts in Christ Jesus. Show no anxiety but say your prayers and petitions with thanksgiving and make all your requests known in humility.

In the Gospel Jesus tells a parable to the chief priests and elders concerning the vineyard leased out to tenants who refuse to fulfill their obligations. These wicked ones will be disposed of and the vineyard leased to others who will obtain produce as expected. This parable was a clear warning to religious leaders who did not take proper spiritual care of the people.

The Father plants us in the vineyard,  
The Son cultivates us,  
The Holy Spirit guides us in producing fruit.

Today's readings remind us that the Lord expects all of us to be productive according to our calling. Our culture often appears chaotic and our prayerful efforts, small as they may be, help bring order in unexpected ways. Concentrate on noble things, says Paul, and God's peace will permeate you and those you meet. The Kingdom of God will be given to the people that will produce its fruit, therefore do not take the attitude that your efforts are too small to be meaningful. Be a gracious and productive person this week.



Yahweh is the owner of the vineyard (Israel) and the religious and political leaders of Jesus' time were responsible for taking care of it. Prophets were sent to them for guidance but they were all subjected to violence. When the owner sends his son expecting him to receive a hearing they give him a more violent treatment and kill him. The owner will return, the tenants will be punished and evicted, and the present leaders will no longer have preeminence in the Kingdom of God. They have rejected Jesus and his message and this is the reason for their downfall. The vineyard will be leased to others who can produce an abundant harvest of justice. All of us are called to work together as a community in Christ and do our share in building up the Kingdom of God. No work, no contribution is either too small or too great.

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