

Homily for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Oct.4, 2020

In the scriptures chosen for this Sunday from Isaiah and Matthew we see they both use the same basic story, a parable about a vineyard. But actually the **story of the vineyard** is an *allegory*. A *parable* normally presents one lesson and the details are not so relevant while in an *allegory* each detail of the story has its own symbolic meaning.

I think it is easy for us to picture a vineyard. In the recent news the vineyards in California, just outside San Francisco in Napa Valley are threatened by wildfires. These wildfires are about to destroy them and remember these vineyards are the best vineyards we have in all of the United States for fine wines. So even though there are no vineyards around this neck of the woods we, are familiar with this idea of a vineyard.

Today we are told in our gospel reading that we (you and I) are the beautiful vineyard of the Lord. Like the owners of vineyards, God spares no expense with us and gives us good gifts. He gives us *life, hope, love and the ability to love others as well as to receive love in return*. In particular, God has given us his own special love in the sacrament of Baptism. In this sacrament we receive sanctifying grace so that God dwells within us through the Holy Spirit. Above all, please don't forget God has given us the promise of eternal life.

In the gospel reading today we are told the farmer is disappointed. He looks for juicy grapes but finds only wild grapes that are sour. As Catholics, we are right to life people, so we thank God for the gift of life and we realize that we are called to preserve and nourish life. In particular, we are called to protect, in a special way, the lives of the weakest among us: the unborn, the handicapped, the sick, the elderly and the dying. It is precisely in caring for these most precious lives that we make our garden grow and produce good grapes.

Saint Paul speaks today to the Philippians, his beloved people. He is speaking to them from his prison cell. He tells them and us what virtues we should possess. He reminds us: *“that whatever is true, let us endorse it; whatever is honorable, let us endorse, it whatever it is just, let us in endorse it, whatever is pure let us in endorse it.”* So, this Sunday we are called to examine our hearts and to think deeply about the gifts God has given uniquely to each of us. These gifts make us the individual we are.

Hence, we have some questions for ourselves to ponder. Are we doing all that we can for the weakest among us? Is there someone in particular that we should go visit? If we do so, do we see if that person needs anything when we go shopping? Does a shut-in person need us to visit him/her on a regular basis? Perhaps we can think a bit more about other’s needs, then just the needs we ourselves have! Also, recently on October 1st, we celebrated the feast of Saint Theresa, the little flower. What an example she was of what God is asking us to do in today’s Gospel!

So the question is simple. What is God is asking us to do today?