

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
How Am I Living the Kingdom of God?

Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:9,12,13-14,15-16,19-20; Philippians 4:6-9; Matthew 21:33-43

Dear brothers and sisters,

Our Father in heaven, the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, wills to bless us with what we need and calls us to be good stewards of the earth. What we receive is meant to be shared. We are not here to hoard for ourselves but to give generously.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a story. A landowner planted a vineyard, built a fence, dug a winepress, and constructed a tower. He entrusted the vineyard to tenants (cf. Matt. 21:33). The tenants did not make the vineyard; they simply received it. But over time, they began to act as if it belonged to them.

When it was time for the harvest, the owner sent his servants to collect it, but the tenants turned them away and even killed some. Later, the owner sent his son, and the tenants said, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance" (Matt 21:38). We can imagine how deeply this hurt the owner, seeing those he trusted turn against him. It is sad to think of the tenants treating him this way. They refused to give him what was his and tried to keep everything for themselves.

This sad story reminds us of Isaiah's song about a friend who owned a vineyard and was heartbroken when it failed to produce good fruit. God's people, like the vineyard, squandered their blessings and failed to bring about justice and righteousness, which ruined it (cf. Is 5:1-7).

This message shows us that when we take what belongs to God, we put ourselves first and ignore Him. It makes us think about what "mine" really means. "Mine" means ownership, but it also carries responsibility. We should care not only about what is ours. If we let the idea of "mine" control us, our possessions and desires will rule our lives. We forget that everything we have is a gift from God and that we are only here for a short time.

This can happen in many ways, often because of greed and pride. Greed is wanting more than we need. Pride is always thinking, "I deserve it."

It is not wrong to own things, but being too attached to them can harm us and those around us. Sometimes we feel unhappy because we believe we are missing something. Greed is like feeling hungry even after eating. Greed says, "I want more, even if others have less." This happens when people treat the world's resources as their own and ignore others' needs. It also happens when making money is more important than caring for people, or when we keep more than we need while others go without.

Jesus teaches us that we are not the true owners. We are stewards, each working in the vineyard. Our money is entrusted to us. Our talents are gifts meant to be used well. We are given our roles so we can use them wisely. Even our time is something we are trusted to use well. The earth is also a gift we are meant to care for. One day, the owner will ask each of us, "What did you do with what I entrusted to you?"

I once heard a story about a rich man who died. After his funeral, someone asked, "How much did he leave behind?" The answer was revealing: "Everything."

One day, this will be true for us as well. The time will come when we must let go of everything. We cannot take our money, houses, land, titles, or possessions with us. But what we give out of love is different. It is the help we give to those in need, the food we share with the hungry, the time we spend

with someone who is lonely, the education we offer a poor child, the forgiveness we extend, and the love we show. Remember, no one ever became poor by being generous, but many have lost everything by spending carelessly or giving in to vice.

The final line of the Prayer for Peace, often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, reads: "It is in giving that we receive, and it is in dying (dying to pride) that we are born to eternal life." This reminds us that, in the end, we will answer for how we lived. What matters to God is not how much we kept, but how much we learned to give in love. We cannot take with us what we received, only what we have given.

Let us heed St. Paul's advice to keep God at the center of our lives: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

While we still have the vineyard to care for, let us produce good fruit and hold our blessings with open hands. We are the Lord's vineyard and stewards of God's Kingdom. We should offer Him what is His.

No matter where we are or what we do, our time is vintage time.
Everything comes from God, belongs to Him, and will one day return to Him.

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