

**27th Sunday in Ordinary Time- A: Stewardship and Our Commitment to Christ's Mission:
Is 5:1-7; Phi 4:6-9; Mat 21:33-43**

A wealthy man once owned a beautiful garden. He had spent years planting trees, flowers, and vines. One day, he had to leave for a long journey, so he asked his friend to take care of the garden. Before leaving, he said, **"I am entrusting this garden to you. Water the plants, protect the vines, remove the weeds, and take care of everything. When I return, I hope to see a good harvest."** The friend agreed. But after the owner left, the man began to think, **"Why should I work so hard? The garden isn't really mine."** He stopped watering the plants. He ignored the weeds. He neglected the vines. He enjoyed the garden, but he did not care for it. When the owner finally returned, he found the garden dry, overgrown, and unproductive. The owner did not ask him, **"Did you enjoy the garden?"** He asked, **"What did you do with what I entrusted to you?"**

This is the question God asks every one of us today. "What have you done with what I entrusted to you?" Because, in many ways, we are all living in God's vineyard.

1. God has entrusted us with His vineyard: In the first reading, Isaiah gives us the beautiful image of a vineyard. The owner carefully prepares the vineyard. He clears the stones, plants the finest vines, builds a watchtower, and provides everything necessary for a good harvest. But when he looks for grapes, he finds only wild grapes. God is saying to Israel—and to us: **"I have given you so much. What fruit are you producing?"** God has invested Himself in us. He has given us life. He has given us faith. He has given us family and community. He has given us the Church. He has given us opportunities to serve. The question is not simply, **"What do I have?"** The deeper question is: **"What fruit is my life producing for God?"** Are we producing the fruits of love, kindness, forgiveness, generosity, patience, and service?

2. We are tenants, not owners: Jesus continues the same image in today's Gospel. A landowner plants a vineyard and leases it to tenants. When harvest time comes, he sends servants to collect the fruits. But the tenants become selfish. They forget that the vineyard belongs to someone else. Finally, the owner sends his son. The tenants even reject and kill the son. This parable points directly toward Jesus. The Son is Christ Himself, whom the leaders rejected. But there is also a message for every one of us. Sometimes we can behave like the tenants.

We say, **"This is my money."** **"This is my time."** **"This is my talent."** **"This is my life."** But faith reminds us: **Everything ultimately belongs to God.** We are simply entrusted with it for a time. This is the heart of **Christian stewardship.** Stewardship is not simply about giving money to the Church. Money is one part of stewardship, but stewardship is much bigger. It means giving God our **time, talent, treasure, and testimony.** **As Stewards of God's gifts, we are called to live generously.** **Christ's mission appeal provides an opportunity for every catholic in the diocese of Saginaw to support ministries that serve our local Church throughout our eleven counties. Every gift, regardless of size, is valued and makes a difference.**

3. Our parish is part of Christ's vineyard: Our parish is also God's vineyard. Christ has entrusted this parish to all of us—not only to the priest, not only to parish staff, and not only to a few generous families. **It belongs to all of us because it belongs to Christ.** And Christ has given us a mission: To worship God. To proclaim the Gospel. To care for the poor. To educate our children in faith. To support families. To welcome those who feel lonely or forgotten. To reach out to those who have stopped coming to church.

Every one of us has a role. Some can serve through teaching. Some through music. Some through visiting the sick. Some through parish ministries. Some through prayer. Some through financial support. Some simply by offering a listening ear or a helping hand.

There is no small ministry when it is done for Christ. A person who gives five dollars with love, a person who gives an hour of service, and a person who spends years serving the parish are all offering something precious to God.

4. Do not worry—trust God and serve Him: Then St. Paul gives us an important word in the second reading: **“Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”** Sometimes we hesitate to serve because we think: “I don’t have enough time.” “I don’t have enough ability.” “I am too old.” “I am too young.” “Someone else can do it.” But Paul reminds us to begin with prayer and trust.

God does not ask us to do everything. He asks us to faithfully do our part. Perhaps you cannot preach like a priest. Perhaps you cannot sing like a choir member. Perhaps you cannot teach like a catechist. But you can pray. You can encourage. You can give. You can serve. You can forgive. You can invite someone back to church. You can become a good example of Christian living.

5. What harvest will we give to God? One day, each of us will stand before the Lord. The question will not be: **“How much did you own?”** But rather: **“What did you do with what I gave you?”** Christ's mission continues through us. The vineyard is in our hands. The harvest is before us.

Let us not be tenants who simply consume what God has given us. Let us be faithful stewards who return a generous harvest. So, perhaps this week, each of us can ask three questions: **What has God entrusted to me? What am I doing with it? And what more can I offer for Christ and His mission?**

May God give us generous hearts—not hearts that ask, **“What can the Church give me?”**, but hearts that ask, **“What can I give to Christ and His mission?”** And when the Lord comes looking for fruit, may He find in our lives a beautiful harvest of **faith, love, generosity, service, and commitment.** Acts 4:32 says, “The community of believers was of **one Heart and Mind**, and no one claimed that any of her or his possessions was her/his own, but they had everything in common.” Amen