

HOMILY TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME MATTHEW

1. Vineyard, like a garden needs regular and constant care
 - a. Even with the best of care a garden can fail us
2. Isaiah pictures Israel as being God' vineyard
 - a. Like the owner of a vineyard God has cared for his people
 - b. The owner of a vineyard finds fertile ground
 - i. He clears it of stones and plants good vines
 - ii. He would expect a good yield of grapes, not just a bunch of wild grapes
 - iii. If all he gets are wild grapes, he might knock down that vineyard and start over
 - c. Isaiah says to Israel
 - i. Despite all the care God has provided to you
 - ii. Bringing you out of slavery, giving you King David
 - iii. You have not chosen to be faithful to God, you have gone after false gods, mistreated widow and orphan
 - iv. greed, violence and lust lead to a coarsening of culture as they do today
 - v. Isaiah says to Israel should you not be concerned that God will just give up on you
 - vi. We may find that if we do not care for the vulnerable, someday we may be the vulnerable person needing care
3. Jesus says the same thing in his image of the vineyard
 - a. In his parable he presents the image of a landowner who leases his vineyard to some tenants
 - i. Rather foolish landowner, puts all kinds of effort into building vineyard
 1. Builds walls and watchtowers
 - ii. Sends servants seeking his share of the harvest, they beat servants and kill them
 - iii. Sends more servants, do the same
 - iv. Finally expects them to respect his son, while they think of taking over the inheritance
 - v. Jesus asks moral of story; expect that he would destroy those tenants
4. Jesus throws an interesting curve into the story
 - a. You are the tenants, risk vineyard may be taken away from you and given to someone who will bear fruit
 - b. Parable is addressed to us as well as Israel
 - c. God gives us reminders to care for his people and his creation
 - d. He sends prophets and preachers to warn us to pay attention to God's will
 - e. He even regularly sends his Son, in the Eucharist, as a reminder of His great gift to us
 - f. We need to ask ourselves are we returning to God a share of the fruit He has given to us

- g. Are we responsible as we care for our families, our communities, our Church
 - i. The prophets are the people asking for our help,
 - ii. giving us advice on how to care for our families and communities,
 - iii. may even be the politicians telling us what they believe is needed for our communities
- h. The scriptures and the Church give us moral principles to consider
 - i. Summarized in call to love our neighbor as ourselves
 - ii. Remembering God has a special care for weak and vulnerable
 - iii. Nearly every prophet warned People to be aware of widows and orphans since these no longer had able bodied family to care for them
- 5. Finally God continually sends His Son to us in Eucharist, in the Scriptures, and especially in the person that is least among us
 - a. The question we need to consider is how are we like the tenants in the parable
 - b. Do we choose to ignore or abuse the Son of God as He comes to us
 - i. Do we take for granted the great gift of the Eucharist, Jesus Body and Blood available each day
 - ii. Are we aware of the needs of those around us or do we get involved only if affects us directly
- 6. We have the freedom to change the parable
 - a. We can realize that Jesus is offering us new life through the Resurrection
 - b. We can be a people sensitive to God's love being willing to accept the responsibilities God gives us
 - c. As Jesus tells us over and over we must always put the needs of others ahead of our own interests
 - i. Perhaps this is most important in this time of electing representatives
 - ii. Temptation is to vote for person who will make our life better
 - iii. we must consider who will work for the common good, especially the most vulnerable
 - iv. Usually not an easy answer to this, will be disagreement over what vision is most effective
 - d. Ultimately we have to put our trust in God,
 - i. If we strive to be faithful to God's will in all that we do even in elections we will bear fruit
 - ii. May not always see what think is success in short run, but ultimately God will use our efforts as means of bringing new life into the world
 - e. If we are faithful to God's will as we discern it, we can be confident that God will give us his peace
 - f. A peace that is stronger than the worries of the present time