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October 4, 2020

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A message

Readings: Is 5:1-7; Phil 4:6-9; Mat 21:33-43

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever seen a vineyard? Rows upon rows of grape vines full of thick clusters of fruit and greenery cover the area. What an honor and responsibility it would be to have the opportunity to tend and nurture the vineyard in order to multiply its plentiful harvest and beauty!

The Gospel today presents us with the parable of the vineyard. Jesus uses the beauty of the vineyard and he draws on the Old Testament imagery of the vineyard of Israel that we heard from the Book of Isaiah in our first reading.

The vineyard, entrusted to the tenants, grows and matures and becomes rich with possibility and is ripe for harvesting. But the tenants *refuse to share* the gifts entrusted to them. Becoming obsessed with security and the defense of their possessions, they kill off anyone, including the landowner's son, who invites them to share what they have. In the end the greed of the tenants becomes *their undoing* for the landowner will have no part of them.

The landowner is, of course, God the Father and the son sent by God to us to be killed, is, of course, Jesus.

When we hear this story in the Gospel, what we should focus on is the landowner's generosity. He sees that his first messengers or servants that he had sent are rejected, beaten up and killed. But instead of angrily getting back at the tenants, the landowner simply hopes for the best and sends

more. But these servants are beaten up, stoned, and killed as well. Ultimately, the landowner decides to send his son in the hope that these tenants would turn from their ways and reconcile with the landowner. But the tenants do not, and so Jesus asks the opinion of the scribes and priests what to do with the evil tenants, and by their own words, the leaders condemn themselves.

Our lives are a vineyard that God, our landowner and king, entrusts to us. And each of our lives, each of our vineyards, is richly blessed. And the voice of God's Son calls out to us *to share our talents, our riches, our giftedness* with those around us and with those who have less. But sadly, we too often become more interested in security...in building walls and towers around ourselves rather than sharing what we have. We forget that our gifts, our talents and our richness are meant to be used and not just stored up. God wants to see us make use of the gifts and opportunities he has given us so that we can grow in faith as his children. Our response must be free, and given out of love. A life withdrawn from generous sharing and love of others loses its meaning and become nothing.

It takes many vines and many branches to make a vineyard. God's vineyard is the Christian community. *This is the vineyard Christ planted and tended with such care that he gave his life for it.* He looks to his vineyard to produce the fruits of justice, love and peace.

How richly blessed each one of us truly is. How sad it would be if we failed to heed the call of God to bring forth the treasures of our lives and share them with others.

The vineyard is ripe for the harvest and God calls out to each one of us: "Come, share what you have and discover that the real treasure is not in what you have but in what you are willing *to give away.*"

The more aware you are and share the good things in your life, the more God will reward you. Let's try to live happily each day with a grateful and caring heart giving thanks and praise to God our Father who continually looks after our needs.

Take good care and stay safe.

Fr. Ignatius Tran