

October 8, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 5:1-7 | Phil 4:6-9 | Mt 21:33-43

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Vineyards were important to the socio-economic structure and well-being of the ancient near east peoples. It would be disastrous for someone to plant and then cultivate a vineyard only for it to be overrun by wild grapes. It would have to be destroyed in order for it to be replanted and recover, which would be financially impossible for most people of that era. So when Isaiah prophesies about God's plan for his vineyard - that is, his people, Israel - it is attention-worthy for its radical nature. Isaiah says that even with all of the Lord's care and cultivation, his people have failed to grow, and they have devolved into idolatry and disobedience. So the Lord will bring his vineyard to ruin. Here's the good news contained (but unspoken in these verses) in that prophecy, however: The Lord will "start over," with a new covenant. And the Word which he sends forth in his Son will be the vine from which all other branches will arise and flourish. Though he will be killed for his message as prophets and messengers before him were, the Son in his victory over death will be the one who gives us the inheritance other tenants have sought. As Jesus himself says in today's Gospel "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." And on this cornerstone is built our salvation.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

There is much to love here on our earthly home - fragrant flowers, beautiful sunsets, and compassionate people. Still, it can be a place of great pain and sadness at times. It can be easy to feel angry and resentful when we encounter the imperfections of the world - when we experience heartache, loss, disappointment. Although working in the Lord's vineyard can be both joyful and heartbreaking, it is up to us to do our best to help it produce fruit until it is time to head to our heavenly home. It is our inheritance, as Christ has made us coheirs with him. St. Paul encourages us to "Have no anxiety at all." Surely, that is easier said than done, but the great Apostle tells us that by our prayers and petitions, "the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

PRAY When we pray to God, we should follow the example of the saints who came before us. St. Paul notes: "Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you." Our prayers are a time to make requests of God but also should be used for thanksgiving. As St. Paul directs, we should make note of all those things that are true, just, lovely, or otherwise worthy of praise.