

**We are Beneficiaries of God's Gifts. 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year A, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
(Isaiah 5:1-7, Phil 4:6-9, Matt 21:33-43)**

Last Sunday's readings focused on the Father's love and forgiveness and that it is not too late to change our hearts. On this 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday, the 1<sup>st</sup> reading, and the gospel use the image of vineyard to speak to us about the father's love and generosity. Today we have Isaiah 5:7a as our responsorial psalm which says, "The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel." When a prophet mentions a vineyard in the Old Testament, it symbolises Israel. Isaiah in our 1<sup>st</sup> reading says Israel is the vineyard that the Lord loved. "He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes." God had wanted Israel to bear good fruits, but instead they bore sour grapes.

In our gospel from Matthew, Jesus picks up that same image of vineyard from Isaiah to give a parable that talks about his own fate at the hands of the Scribes and Pharisees. In the parable Jesus makes it clear that he is the Son, sent by the Father, the owner of the vineyard. The tenants of the vineyard are the Scribes and Pharisees who would treat Jesus like the way they treated the prophets, that is, they will seize and kill the Son. However, the story does not end there, because Jesus will be erected as the cornerstone of the building and the vineyard will be entrusted to somebody else.

In our time the vineyard is no longer Israel, but it is now a symbol of us God's people. We have been given every opportunity by God to change our lives, but we have not done so. We too are like tenants to whom God the Father has lovingly

cared for and given us his vineyard to care for. So, when God comes to us looking for fruits of righteousness and justice, he rather finds stinking fruits of injustice and bloodshed in our daily lives. God expected to see good fruits from us. According to Paul, good fruits in a person's life includes love, joy, peace, forgiveness, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23). Paul also adds more fruits in our second reading, "whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable..." Paul says these are the kind of fruits God comes looking for in our daily lives.

Instead of finding good fruits, God found in us hatred, jealousy, unforgiveness, injustice, etc. But God was not discouraged, he has now sent us his only Son Jesus Christ to encourage and teach us to produce good fruits. What do we do? We still kill Him or nail Him to the cross by our sins like the unfaithful tenants did to his only Son whom he sent. God has given every one of us a vineyard, our families, our communities, our work, our church and even the earth to take care and produce good fruits in these vineyards. We are beneficiaries of God's manifold gifts, but we sometimes make them unproductive or even misuse them. That is why Jesus ended the parable by telling the unproductive tenants, "Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to people that will produce its fruits." Perhaps this week let us pray that God will help us to use his gifts to produce good fruits to help others. **Amen.**

**By Fr Emmanuel Subaar**