

## Homily of Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 2026

Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:9, 12-16; Philippians 4:6-9; Matthew 21:33-43

The first reading is a parable and Isaiah's prophecy of the conquest of Jerusalem and Judah by Assyria which later happened in 701 BC. The conquest was the consequence of Israel's ingratitude to God and turning away from him. Judah was God's cherished vineyard that produced wild grapes instead of good grapes. Instead of judgement and justice, there were bloodshed and outcry from the oppressed. The conquest of Jerusalem and Judah teaches us that our life is overrun by the Evil One when we turn away from God.

In the gospel, Jesus told the chief priests and the elders a parable about the tenants who rebelled against the landowner. They assaulted and killed the landowner's servants, and also killed his son. Jesus presented this parable as a prophecy about himself, foretelling his rejection and crucifixion by the chief priests and the elders. Jesus refers to himself as, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone" (Psalm 118:22). Jesus is the cornerstone of salvation rejected by the chief priests and the elders. Unlike the chief priests and the elders, we have not rejected Jesus. He is our Corner Stone. He is our all in all. Let us not allow the Evil One and the world to make us produce wild grapes instead of good grapes.

Many countries and their rulers are like the vineyard of God in the first reading and the wicked and ungrateful tenants in the gospel reading. God blessed the countries with rich resources for the benefit the citizens. Instead of good judgement and justice, what is seen are greed, corruption, bloodshed, and outcry. In those places, human beings turn God's blessings into curses and tragedies. May God rescue his oppressed children.

Also, we know many instances of individuals who are architects of their own problems or self-destruction. Due to greed and vanity, they turn from cherished vineyard to wild vineyard. Instead of good grapes, they produce wild grapes.

God has given human beings a beautiful world and the authority to subdue everything in it. Then human beings rebel against God and reject him. God is removed from many walks of life. Should we be surprised about the ills in governance and the society?

We are God's vineyards (first reading) and his tenants (gospel reading). As his cherished vineyards who have received countless blessings from God, we are to be grateful to him; and we are to bear good fruits. As tenants (stewards), we are to be productive and accountable. We are not to be destructive, rebellious, and unaccountable. Jesus says, "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" (Luke 12:48).

In the second reading, St. Paul gives us a guide on how to bear good fruits, to be productive, and to be accountable. He tells us to keep before us and to pursue whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, whatever is excellent, and whatever is worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8).

There are people who can see themselves in the first reading and in the gospel. You give your all but what you receive in return is "wild and sour grapes." This experience can be in your family, or work place, or elsewhere. St. Paul advises such people in the second reading to trust their anxiety to God in prayer and with thanksgiving. St. Paul says, "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ

Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18). St. Paul continues, “Then, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds” (Philippians 4:6). Amen.

With all surpassing peace (all exceeding peace), others wonder how you are pulling through despite all odds. You tell them that it is because you have placed all your anxieties on God and he is taking care of you.

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