**October 04, 2020**

**27th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Isaiah 5:1-7**

**Ps 80:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20**

**Mt 21:33-43**

**STEWARDS RESPONSE!**

Many years ago, a friend of mine came to visit me at my office.  In our conversation she started to pour her heart out.  She was in pain because of what her tenants did to her.  She said, **“Father, I was so hurt with what my tenants did to my house.  When I handed the key of the house to them, it was clean and beautiful.  When they returned the key to me, the house was a total disaster.  The hardest thing for me to accept was that I trusted them, but they betrayed me in return.  I feel that they took advantage of me.”**

Like my friend, **have you been taken advantage of by others?  Have you ever experienced trusting someone and it was reciprocated by betrayal?**

The parable we have heard today gives us a picture of betrayal, being taken advantage of, greed, and ingratitude.  And the victim of these betrayal, being taken advantage of, greed and ingratitude was the landowner.  Yes, he prepared his vineyard well before giving it to his tenants – ‘put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower’ - but it was not reciprocated well.  Despite the goodness and kindheartedness, he has shown, he was countered with greed and ingratitude.  The tenants were not thankful at all.  They were so selfish that they did not give the landowner the portion of the produce he deserved.  Clearly, they took advantage of the landowner’s trust and confidence given them.  The most painful thing the tenants did was killed the servants and son that the landowner sent.  Kindness was answered with brutality.

What the tenants demonstrated was not stewardship at all.  **Why?**  1) **A steward, primarily, carries an attitude of gratitude**.  He knows how to reciprocate the goodness and trust accorded him.  He is always grateful to the gifts given him.  Definitely, the tenants did not have this attitude of gratitude.  What they have shown to the landowner was ingratitude.  2) **A steward is not greedy**.  The self is not so much the center but God and others.  The tenants were short of this centeredness on God and others.  They were so self-centered that they failed to see the integrity and decency of the landowner.  Thus, they did not care at all whatever happens to the landowner’s servants and son.  3) **A steward does not take advantage of others nor betray the trust extended to him**.  Rather, thinking of the common good, he will always be just and trustworthy in his practices.  The tenants were lacking these virtues.  They have displayed an unjust and unfair practices towards the landowner that ended in tragedy.

The parable communicates to us today that the landowner is **God**, the present vineyard is the **Church**, and we are the**tenants**.  God, our landowner, expects a lot from us.  He expects us to be responsible tenant-stewards in the vineyard.  He expects us to produce fruits of righteousness.  He is looking forward to see us carry an attitude of gratitude all the time. He is hoping that we will grow selflessly and not selfishly.  He is counting on us that the gifts given will be accepted with gratefulness, make it fruitful, and generously shared it for the sake of his kingdom.

God, our landowner, have generously given us everything – the gift of time, gift of talent, and the gift of treasure.  When he comes to meet us and calls us to give an account of what we have done to those gifts, **can we honestly say that we have used it well for the sake of the Good News?** If we are to make an honest and truthful self-evaluation, **can we declare that we are generous and grateful stewards for everything God has given us?**

I was reading an article written by Fr. Anthony Kadavil on his website and I was struck when he mentioned about the lame excuses most people give with regard to the gifts of time, talent, and treasure.  He said that people usually say:

* **“I have no time.  I am awfully busy.”**  But we might remember that we can always find time for extra entertainment, socializing and so on!

* **“I am not talented.  I have no special skills.”**  Remember that God doesn’t make junk.  Each one of us is a bundle of skills, potentialities and gifts.

* **“Somebody else will do it.”**  No, each of us is an integral part of this parish family, and we each must do our part, big or small.  Each of us is unique.

*(Whenever we are asked to give our time, talent, and treasure to the Church, our vineyard, and ignore the call,****what is usually our excuse?****)*

As we continue to offer this Mass, let us beg the Lord Jesus to help us become responsible, trustworthy, generous, fruitful and grateful tenant-stewards in the vineyard.  Through his grace, may we be able to be constant and committed tenant-stewards using our gifts of time, talent, and treasure helping others become stewards of the Gospel.

God bless us all!