

20261004. Cycle A. XXVII Sunday in Ordinary Time. Carefully planted by God.

Out of curiosity, how many of you are familiar with farming either animals or crops? I'm asking this question because I want to calibrate how much we can relate to the stories that we heard today in the scriptures. I am personally attracted to this type of story because my father was a farmer, and as a little boy, and even as a teenager and adult, I spent time working on the farm. So, all these stories about preparing the soil, seeding, caring for the crops, and waiting for a productive harvest are not only very familiar to me, but I also take them very personally.

I am going to go straight to the point: God has planted each life as a vineyard entrusted to us; we are called to produce spiritual fruit (love, mercy, service) by living in prayer, gratitude, and faithful stewardship rather than anxiety for possessions. So, Let's start with three reflection questions:

1. What kind of vineyard has God entrusted to you, and what fruit is your life currently producing?
2. Which anxieties keep you from trusting God and producing spiritual fruit?
3. How can you respond with mercy and stewardship when you feel tempted to possess rather than serve?

Today's readings invite us to see our lives as a vineyard entrusted to us by God. In our first reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah, God lovingly prepares His vineyard, removes the stones, plants the finest vines, and gives it everything it needs to flourish. Yet it produces wild grapes. The message is both challenging and beautiful: God has invested so much in us because He believes our lives can bear good fruit. We are not accidents; we are carefully planted by God.

Every gift, every opportunity, relationship, struggle, and blessing is part of the vineyard He entrusted to us. Sometimes we may look at ourselves and see only weaknesses. Sometimes we see failures and unfinished dreams and desires. But God sees what we can still become. Do not underestimate what God can produce through a life surrendered to Him.

That's why then Saint Paul, in our second reading, gives us the key to cultivating this vineyard. This is what Saint Paul says: do not be anxious about anything. Instead, bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving. This does not mean that we will never experience problems, that we will never experience disappointments, uncertainty, or pain. No. It means that we do not have to carry them alone. So, stop worrying, start praying, and be grateful, because prayer transforms the weight we carry into trust.

And in the Gospel for today, Jesus tells the parable of the tenants who received a beautiful vineyard but refused to give the harvest to the owner. The tenants became so attached to what was entrusted to them that they eventually acted as though the vineyard belonged to them.

This is a very sad story of life. This is a powerful reminder that anything we have is ultimately a gift before it is a possession. We are just stewards. Our talents, positions, possessions, relationships, homes, ministries, careers, resources, and even our very lives are gifts entrusted to us for a purpose.

God does not ask us merely to possess blessings. He asks us to produce fruit through them: the fruit of love, kindness, forgiveness, generosity, faithfulness, compassion, and service. We often worry about possessions, here is the thing: the greatest tragedy is not having little but receiving much and allowing it to bear no fruit. Our question is not, "How much did I receive," but "What beautiful fruit am I producing with what God has entrusted to me?"

There is another important message in today's Gospel: God has not given up on the vineyard. Even when there have been seasons of dryness, seasons of mistakes, experiences of failures and disappointments, or moments when we have not produced the fruit we hoped for, God's invitation remains.

What seems like an ending can become the beginning of something greater in God's hands. Today's Gospel invites us to keep cultivating our hearts. Keep praying, keep believing, keep forgiving, keep serving, keep loving, keep thanking. We should not let yesterday's failures determine tomorrow's fruit. God can still bring something extraordinary from our very ordinary life.

Your story is not finished. Remember that. Your vineyard is not abandoned. Keep giving God your yes, because when God is the gardener of your life, even wounded places can bloom. Bearing seasons can become fruitful. And what seems impossible can become a beautiful testimony of His grace.

Today's liturgy of the word leaves us with three truths:

- First, we are not accidents; our lives are carefully planted by God.
- Second, we are stewards, not owners; everything we have is meant to build up justice and mercy.
- And finally, God never gives up on His vineyard—He continuously sends us course corrections because He is patient with our failures.

As Saint Paul instructs us this week: stop worrying. Turn your anxieties into prayer, tend your vineyard with gratitude, and watch what extraordinary things God can make bloom from your ordinary life.

Isaiah 5:1-7

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

Philippians 4:6-9

Matthew 21:33-43