

Homily. 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 3/4 October 2020.

There isn't much room left this weekend for imagining what the vineyard of the Lord means. As the Psalm tells us it refers to the house of Israel, what you and I call the People of God. In language they could not mistake Jesus make it clear to the chief priests, elders and leaders of the people that their choices and actions have been contrary to God's will and keep being so. Time after time they have ignored, rejected, thrown out, thrashed and killed God's servants, the Prophets. Soon they will do the same to God's most respected emissary, God's Son. It's because of their hard-hearted refusal to listen and learn that the Kingdom of God will be taken away and given to others who will listen and produce its fruit.

Let's not fall make the mistake of thinking that this story and warning is a bit of history referring only to situations in Israel some 2000 years ago. It isn't, any more than any of Jesus words and teachings are. His message, rightly understood, is as relevant and powerful for us today as it was when first uttered. We, too, can become hard of heart and deaf to God's message. Like the leaders Israel back then we can focus on our own privilege, secure in our special knowledge and position while failing to follow God's will and produce the fruits of the Kingdom; justice and mercy, holiness and integrity of life, love and peace amongst people.

St. Paul offers us some practical ways we can live faithfully in this ever changing and passing world. He says that we have to lay aside our worries, praying trustfully to God for what we need, with hearts full of thanksgiving for what we have. In time this brings us into the peace of God which guards us in the way of Christ Jesus. Paul adds that we are to

seek to fill our minds with everything truthful, loving and praiseworthy, for from peaceful hearts and minds focused on goodness flow the fruits of the Kingdom. This wisdom for living is drawn from what Jesus taught, namely, that it is from our hearts, from our intentions, thoughts and character that evil or goodness arise. If we want to live well, enlightened by our faith filled with the Lord's peace, then attentive prayer, gratefulness of heart and God's values need to be our focus and practice.

The Good-News for us, and you'll hear it in the preface I've chosen, is that we are now called and must think of ourselves as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, the trustworthy vineyard workers of the Lord in our age. This is possible because our Lord has accomplished a marvellous deed for us in His death and resurrection, His Pascal mystery. He has freed us from the yoke of our enslavement to sin and death, calling us out of darkness into God's wonderful light. It's this freedom won by God's mercy and forgiveness that enables us to become who God calls us to be. So then, Every time that we come together to celebrate and receive the Eucharist God's calling and gift is renewed and deepened within us making us into the Body of Christ, the very One we receive in our communion. For this marvellous gift, and for all of God's goodness, this day of the Lord we give to God our thanks and praise.