

Deacon Tony's October 8, 2023 Homily for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Vineyards are places that we can all appreciate if we enjoy a glass of wine every now and then. In the time of Isaiah and Jesus, the vineyard was used as an example that many people related to. They knew the amount of work needed to prepare a PRODUCTIVE vineyard that would yield luscious grape for wine or for eating. But let us look at the vineyards in a spiritual context in order to understand what God wants to teach us about our lives. As we hear in the Responsorial Psalm:

"THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD IS THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL".

Jesus too, in the Gospel of Matthew, uses the vineyard as an example for the chief priests and elders. He talks about the hard work the landowner did to guarantee that it would produce good fruit. He chose tenants farmers to continue to care for the vineyard and see that it produces. But the tenants, in their greed, chose to try and steal, not only the produce but the land itself. Jesus warned the chief priests and elders their authority was about to be taken away. That the new leaders would build God's kingdom on Jesus who was rejected by the same chief priests and elders. These builders were the Apostles of Jesus; the same Apostles that we have descended from. When we read the Nicene creed after this homily, we read "I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

Now we look at what the vineyard is for us today. The vineyard is the Church (the body of Christ). God is the owner who has big plans for His vineyard. He has worked very hard to see that everything is done correctly in order that the workers can have a successful harvest. He has instituted Sacraments to give us the grace we need to work hard. He has given us the Bible to study and understand our true calling and how to be successful harvesters. He has given us each other to enjoy fellowship which brings understanding. He has given us the elderly to care for. He has given us the poor and less fortunate to give from our surplus. He has provided PROPHETS who teach: POPE FRANCIS, BISHOP BARRON, SCOTT HAHN, FATHER MIKE AND JEFF CAVENS @ ASCENSION PRESS. These are some of the prophets of our time. In the past prophets were stoned and murdered. In foreign countries many prophets are losing their lives over Our Lord's message. **But in the civilized world something worse than death occurs; it is to be IGNORED as if you don't exist.**