

27th Sunday Ordinary Time

Isaiah begins today's readings "Let me tell you about my friend's vineyard"

Often when we think of vineyards we think of CAL. FRANCE – rolling hills, exquisite wines

Not what Isaiah is talking about – he's talking about vineyards like my Grandfather's

My Grandfather always had a garden – leftover from the depression I think.

- But behind the house he had a trellis so the vines could grow up and hang on
- I remember that the vine was grey and stringy, completely useless for anything but producing grapes
- I remember the leaves were huge broad leaves, a great place to find shade when hot
 - Except that under the arbor it was full of gnats and fruitflies
- The arbor was really an eyesore, ugly and useless if it didn't do the one thing it was planted to do – grow big sweet purple grapes – perfect for wine (or grape jelly).

"Let me tell you about my friend's vineyard" Isaiah says.

He finds a fertile hillside, spades the ground, clears the rocks, planted choice vines, waters it

(Much better than my Grandfather's trellis)

Nothing is left undone. BUT THE GRAPES WERE NO GOOD - so why have it?

Wild grapes are small and sour – multiply when the vineyard not properly tended.

But Isaiah's vineyard had all the care that could've been provided.

Israel was the vineyard.

God had taken them from the Exile, cleared the land, planted them, met all their needs.

Gifts of life, insight, hope, ambition, imagination, they were loved – and yet NO FRUIT

Same can be true of us.

WE are the garden, we are cared for, nurtured, loved and are blessed with many gifts.

GOD'S GIFTS ARE EXPECTED TO BEAR FRUIT

Gospel tells a similar story: The landowner is the Lord.

At harvest time the Lord looks for the fruit of the harvest

He sends the prophets, and they are beaten

He sends more and they are killed

He sends His Son, and He is killed

The parable ends

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to those who will bear fruit"

We are called to be children of God We are blessed with many different gifts and talents

We can use them to earn our living – and we do, and that's a good thing.

We should also use them to grow the Kingdom of God.

How are we doing that? What kind of grapes are we producing?

Our church is made up of human beings – we struggle with sin, with racism, sexism, culture of death.

This is only half the story:

We are people of light. The Church has stood up for human rights, works for the poor and the suffering.

We know we are earthen vessels, and we are cracked and broken

We know our Church has all sort of scars and dents and cracks

But the Light of Christ shines thru cracks!

We are people of the Light – our destiny is to be in the light – and to bear much fruit.

So I ask you again – with your blessings, with your gifts, with your talents – where is our fruit?

What kind of grapes are we producing for the Glory of God?