

ORDINARY TIME 27TH SUNDAY [Year A]

Homily by Fr. Maraiah

The common theme of today's readings is *the necessity of bearing fruit* in the Christian life.

The readings warn us of the punishment for spiritual sterility, ingratitude, and wickedness.

In today's first reading, called, *Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard*, the prophet describes God's care of, and expectations for His Chosen People. God's Chosen People failed to bear fruit, in spite of the blessings lavished upon them by a loving and forgiving God. Further, they were poor tenants in the Lord's vineyard. Hence, God laments: "*I expected My vineyard to yield good grapes. Why did it yield sour ones instead?*"

In the second reading, Paul tells Philippians about the high expectations he has for them, reminding them that they need to become fruit-producing Christians by praying and giving thanks to God and by practicing justice, purity and graciousness in their lives.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells an allegorical parable in which the landowner is God, the vineyard is Israel, as God's special people, and the tenants are the political and religious leaders of Israel. The story emphasizes the failure of the tenants, the Chosen People of God and their leaders, to produce fruits of righteousness, justice and mercy. Giving a theological explanation of Israel's history of gross ingratitude through the parable, Jesus reminds us Christians that, since we are the "new" Israel, enriched with additional blessings and provisions in the Church, we are expected to show our gratitude to God by bearing fruits of the kingdom, fruits of the Holy Spirit, in our lives, giving Him all the Glory.

1) Are we good fruit-producers in the vineyard of the Church? Jesus has given the Church everything necessary to make Christians fruit-bearing. i) The Bible to know the will of God. ii) The priesthood to lead the people in God's ways. iii) The Sacrament of Reconciliation for the remission of sins. iv) The Holy Eucharist as our spiritual food. v) The Sacrament of Confirmation for a dynamic life of Faith. vi) The Sacrament of Matrimony for the sharing of love in families, the fundamental unit of the Church. vii) Role models in thousands of saints. We are expected make use of these gifts and produce fruits for God.

2) Are we fruit-producers in the vineyard of the family? By the mutual sharing of blessings, by sacrificing time and talents for the members of the family, by humbly and lovingly serving others in the family, by recognizing and encouraging each other and by honoring and gracefully obeying our parents we, become producers of "good fruit" for the Vine, Christ, in our families, and so give Glory to God.