



STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION ON LECTIONARY READINGS

October 4, 2020 — Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

[IS 5:1-7; PS 80:9, 12-16, 19-20; PHIL 4:6-9; MT 21:33-43](#)

We have been given so many gifts and blessings by our Heavenly Father. Yet, in our fallen state it is all too easy to take them for granted. Our readings today teach us that we must live with an intentional awareness of our many blessings and use them gratefully to glorify God.

Our First Reading, from Isaiah, foreshadows today's Gospel passage. Both passages employ images of a landowner and his vineyard. The First Reading tells the story of a landowner who, with great love and care, creates the perfect vineyard and fills it with the choicest vines. Yet, it fails to produce good fruit. As a result, the landowner allows the vineyard to go to ruin. This is a reminder that while Our Heavenly Father is merciful and kind, He is also just. As Christian stewards, we must continuously fight the tendency towards complacency and instead use our blessings to produce good fruit.

Our Second Reading, from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, is a reminder of one key blessing that is surprisingly easy to take for granted — the gift of our thought life. Our intellect is a gift from God and we are called to steward it well. Lack of discipline in our thoughts can easily lead us down a path of discontentment and fear. St. Paul instructs us rather to "have no anxiety at all." How are we to do this? He tells us, "In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God." And as it turns out, by turning our thoughts towards God with gratitude, we will be blessed immediately. Paul continues, "Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Paul gives specific advice for intentionally maintaining an attitude of gratitude in our thought life. "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, and if there is anything worthy of praise" these are the things we should focus on. As we develop this habit we will discover a powerful way to navigate life with peace and joy despite the troubles that surround us.

In our Gospel passage from Matthew, we return to the image of a vineyard in a parable Jesus uses to teach the importance of using our blessings well. It is the story of a landowner who plants a vineyard and leases it to tenants before he goes on a journey. Instead of tending the vineyard, the tenants mistreat the servants in the vineyard and even the son of the landowner, whom they kill. When the landowner realizes what the tenants have done, he puts

them to death and leases his vineyard to tenants who “will give him the produce at the proper times.”

By Baptism, we have received the gift of salvation and membership in Kingdom of God — we are now “tenants” called to work in the “vineyard” and produce fruit for its owner, our Heavenly Father. This calling is a gift from God to be treasured above all other gifts. Jesus makes it clear that if we squander the gift of salvation, we will lose it. It is a sobering truth.

So let us live each day with a profound awareness of all that we have been given by God. Let us use our intellect to think on these gifts throughout the day and resolve to use all our gifts for God’s glory. We will find peace, joy and purpose as we do.

— *Stewardship Reflections by [Catholic Stewardship Consultants](#)*