

## **Parable of the wicked tenants**

Today's readings talk about how much God has done for us and our failure to correspond to his love. The first reading from the book of Isaiah is a song exulting the vineyard. An orchard with vines was very precious in the Mediterranean area. It produced grapes, fruit for the time, wine, a good healthy drink with no bugs, and dried fruit, raisins, for the months ahead. It required a lot of work to keep the vines healthy, and to learn the art of winemaking. The parable of the wicked tenants highlights our responsibility in looking after the vineyard of the Lord and the duty to produce a good spiritual wine in due time. It is also a reminder of our history of salvation.

God first entrusted his vineyard to the chosen people. He gave them what they needed, a promised land, a land of milk and honey; he dug a trench around it, making sure they lived in peace and prosperity, getting rid of all the enemies surrounding them; and built a watch tower in the middle of it, giving them prophets and kings to lead them. But they were unfaithful to him and adored the neighbor's gods. God tried everything with them and forgave them when they repented. But they kept rebelling against him and in the end He sent them his only Son as the last resort. They seized him, threw him out of Jerusalem and killed him.

Today is good day to examine ourselves. How are we taking care of the vineyard, of the piece of the kingdom God has entrusted to us? It is not ours, but we should take care of it as if it was ours, our personal responsibility. We should make sure we yield the fruit God is expecting from us, not our personal product; it should be something for others, not just for ourselves. It will be a pity if we were to hear the admonition of Jesus at the end of the parable, directed to the Jews: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

What sort of fruit are we producing? Are we only collecting wild, sour grapes? Is our life worthwhile, full of beautiful sweet grapes? God has been so good to us. He has given us all we need to look after his vineyard. And we, like the chosen people, are often ungrateful, we are lazy, we don't put the time and dedication our job deserves, and we let the vineyard to go waste. Instead of looking after what God has given us, we look over our neighbor's fence and we envy him his vineyard. We think that his grass is greener. At the end we fail to produce the wine God is expecting from us.

A friend of mine, a winemaker, told me about this famous winemaker who makes only five hundred bottles a year, mixing with art good vintages, and sells them in the US for a thousand dollars a bottle, a wine only for the rich and glamorous. He makes half a million dollars. I asked him if it is a good wine. He said: "It must be a good wine, but I don't know if it is worth a thousand dollars. I cannot afford the test it." This is the wine we need to produce, a wine worth a million dollars, worthy for the table of the Lord, a wine to be tasted for eternity, that will last for ever.