

**Twenty-Seventh Sunday, October 2, 2011**  
**Day for Life**

**Mrs Marie Deans**  
**National Director Pontifical Mission Societies, Canada (Toronto)**

**First Reading: Isaiah 5: 1-7**

This reading is much like a parable. It is indeed, a love song. Isaiah speaks of his beloved who lavishes enormous care on his vineyard. One can only imagine his disappointment with the harvest. As a result he decided to abandon the vineyard. Isaiah says God's reaction to our failure to bear good fruit in our lives is much the same. The vineyard is God's people. What God wants from them is justice and goodness.

**Second Reading: Philippians 4: 6-9**

St Paul tells of his own suffering and begs the Philippians not to allow their own personal concerns or the embittering conflicts that have divided the community to rob them of joy and peace. He reminds them to turn to prayer and insists that prayer must be accompanied by a sincere effort to live as disciples of Christ. He encourages his readers to opt for what is true and honourable, pure and just.

**Gospel: Matthew 21: 33-43**

Jesus accuses the religious leaders of his time of failing in their responsibilities with regard to the vineyard. This parable invites us to think deeply about those Jesus refers to: the slaves who are maltreated are not unlike the prophets of the Old Testament, the owner's son refers to Jesus who suffered and died.

Jesus rebukes the chief priests to admit that the actions of the tenants were unacceptable. In condemning the tenant's actions, they unwittingly condemn themselves. The kingdom and the responsibilities they have with regard to it will be taken from them and given to others who are worthy of God's gift.

**Homily Notes**

All the readings this Sunday share a common image found in the scriptures, that of the vineyard. Also, all three readings are one in their challenge and encouragement for us to live a life worthy of the Gospel. We are challenged to go forth and bear good fruit.

God made all of creation out of his self giving love. God wants us to bear fruit, to become decent loving people and create a world in which justice will flourish and peace can be enjoyed by all. What God finds is violence, bloodshed and the anguished cry of the oppressed. Given the state of our world today, Isaiah's reading leaves us with much to reflect on.

Today's readings are a love story of God for all of humankind. God created the world out of selfless love. God created it for us to enjoy but to be faithful stewards of his creation. Love demands reciprocity and mutuality. It presupposes freedom and involves commitment. By creating us in his own image and likeness, God has given us freedom to choose what is good. God has given us the capacity to love him and all those of his creation.

The last few verses of St Paul's letter to the Philippians sum up the kind of fruit that God wants us to bear in our lives. It captures who we are as human beings; our social nature from our responsibility for ourselves, our families, our environment and our larger world community. We are called to be alive and make a difference in our lives. We are called to be honest, just, considerate and caring. We are called to leave this world a better place than we found it.

As part of our baptism we are called to proclaim and live the word. Each of us is called to live out our lives together in faith. As a people of faith, we have accepted Christ's gospel. We are called to keep it alive in our memory, to celebrate its reality in our lives and to bear witness to its saving power. Through prayer and the Eucharist as well as committed service to those in need we will bring forth the fruits of the kingdom.

– end –