

Homely of the 27TH Sunday of the Ordinary Time liturgical year A



Alas, alas, I have betrayed your love, Lord, but change is possible since the mercy of the Lord is available!

Readings: Is 5: 1-7;

Ps 79 (80): 9-12, 13-14, 15-16a, 19-20;

Ph 4: 6-9;

Mt 21: 33-43

Homely

Dear brothers and sisters, may the grace and favor of our Lord descend and dwell upon each and every one of you.

On this 27th Sunday of Ordinary Time in liturgical year A, I invite you to pray and ponder on three themes that emerge from the readings:

1. **I am priceless in the eyes of God**

The vine that is depicted in the first reading as well as in the gospel enjoys the owner's unbounded attention and passion. The owner spares neither his forces nor his means and his time to give his vineyard an incomparable brilliance and majesty. All those who see this vineyard, feel the love of the owner, his attachment and his devotion to the well being of both the exterior and interior of his vineyard. By choosing a fertile hillside, turning over the land, removing stones, building a watchtower and digging a press, and erecting a fence, the owner wants his vineyard to be safe from all danger, inside and outside, far or near. What more can one ask for?

Yet, not all this is enough for the master. He still puts at the service of his vineyard, not simple workers or people of lesser means, but he engages the services of winegrowers, specialized people, to reassure himself not only of the health of his vineyard but also of the quality of its fruits. This master inspires admiration, even veneration. This master reminds me of the only person I know

capable of such love: God. My life is a blessing.

I do not often take the time to be enchanted by the wonders of God in my life, by « the wonder and the amazing being that I am ». Often I hear people ask me: but how do you do it? What is your secret? Some even go so far as to think that I have made a pact with the devil or that my joy lies in material goods. Yet, I am not rich, I do not have an exorbitant bank account, nor do I have a large land estate. I simply, but deeply, have what many seek in this lowly world and that nothing can buy: the love of God. This love, free, unconditional and without measure, he gives it to me every day through his word, his teachings, and the events of my life, the meetings, and the exchanges. I must take the time to realize with emotion how much I am loved by God, and ask Him to teach me to love Him.

2. **But alas, alas, I have betrayed your love, Lord.**

I spend most of my time listing what I am missing, what I am lacking, what others have and what I do not have. I concentrate and waste my energies envying, jealous, denigrating and degrading myself, belittling myself, attacking God and lamenting my physical, psychic, social and spiritual condition. The negative treatment that I inflict on myself is what gives Satan the space to drive me deeper, to make me doubt God and to kill the love in me.

Thus I become the laughing stock of everyone, I find myself without protection, at the mercy of those who were waiting for an opportunity to reduce me to nothing. This lack of love makes me a sterile, unproductive, and desolate vine. In addition, on another level, I become like those jealous winegrowers, thieves, mercenaries and murderers. One look at society and I see how the cancer of lack of love and recognition takes its toll and continues to spread destruction throughout humanity and the entire universe.

My country, Cameroon, is a striking example of this. People from the same family kill each other, members of the same community abuse each other, the North and the South hate each other, etc. I see how the lack of love and recognition cancer is taking its toll and continues to spread destruction throughout humanity and the entire universe. It is disorder, confusion, unhappiness. Those who dare to raise their voice are mistreated, those who demand accountability are indexed and hunted.

Often I sit down and cry out with the psalmist: « Why have you broken through the fence of your vineyard, Lord? All the passers-by pick it up along the way, the wild boar of the forest ravages it and the beasts of the field graze it. This is the spectacle; this is the state of things.

3. **but change is possible since the mercy of the Lord is available**

However, everything is not lost, love is stronger than death. God loves me so much that he couldn't abandon me. Yes he will come to my rescue. I also want to come back to him. I have made a mistake. I thought he was exaggerating, he was doing too much, hindering me from breathing, that away from him would be better.

I thought, if I could murder all those voices calling me to repentance, to change, to give back to God what belongs to him, I will have peace, I will be a god. But it was an illusion, I went astray. Today I am ashamed to come back, I do not know how to fix those damages. Will God accept me again, will he forgive me? I have betrayed his love.

Yes, the Lord will forgive me. I should pray and beg him as Saint Paul said, I shall make him know my regret, my remorse and moreover my desire to become again that awesome vineyard, my wish to be a good winemaker. It is my attitude that I have to change. My look on myself and on the others should be transformed. I have to seek what is noble, just and pure, worthy to be loved and honored,

everything that is called virtue. While doing that, the peace of God above everything conceivable with keep my heart and thoughts in the Christ Jesus.

Thus, brothers and sisters, it is still possible to do better, to find the beauty of the love relationship with God. It is today, now and here that the change decision has to be taken, the decision to come back to God. And never forget, you are not alone. The Lord is always there to help you. Shout out to him, ask the help of his Holy Spirit. May God Bless you.

Amen

Father Patrick Mugisho, SJ, priest of Jesus Christ in the USA

Christus Vivit