

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A
St. Patrick's and St. Theresa's
Isaiah 5:1-7
Philippians 4:6-9
Matthew 21:33-43
October 2, 2011

CMA

God is the creator of all. God is creator of the universe and our planet. God has created a beautiful vineyard and given it to us. God has given us everything we need.

What have we done with it?

Have we made good grapes or wild grapes? Have we borne good fruit?

In Genesis 1:27, God has given us "dominion" over the whole world. How do we see this "dominion"?

We might like to see our "dominion" as meaning giving us complete ownership of the world and that we can do whatever we want with it. Some people actually look at it that way and live only with themselves in mind.

But in the gospel, Jesus tells a parable. The landowner set up a good vineyard. Once everything was established, he leased the

vineyard out to some tenants. They would care for the vineyard and each would receive a portion of the crop according to their contribution. This was a common agreement of Jesus' time.

But when it comes time for the landowner to collect his share, the tenants will not give it to his servants. They want to keep it for themselves. In fact, their greed has become so great they kill the landowner's servants and eventually even his son so they can keep it for themselves.

God is the landowner. God has created the vineyard for us. God has given us the vineyard and all that it contains for our use. God doesn't force us to do anything with it but God does ask that we use it wisely not for selfish gain but for the good of all people.

What do you choose to do with what God has been you? Do you seek to build up material wealth for yourself or do you act as a good steward, using what you have been given for everyone's good in accord with God's will.

Thinking of in terms of the gospel parable, do we give God his due? As stewards of God's creation, we are called to use our time, talent, and treasure to love.

We can volunteer some time to help someone in need. Perhaps we have a special skill that someone needs help with. While not everyone has the same gifts, *together* we have everything we need.

Alone, we might have a lot, *together* we have all we need. Recognizing these gifts God has given us, we show our appreciation by doing God's will.

What is it that God asks of us but to proclaim the gospel and share his love, each according to our gifts. We can each help individually but our help can be multiplied by working together.

That's our theme for this year's Catholic Ministries Appeal, *The Power of Many, Stronger as One.*

We can't all do everything but by pooling some of our resources we can work together to fulfill the mission God has given us.

Our annual Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA) is about doing just that. Some might just see it as giving money to the diocese. I see it as contributing to the mission of the church. Our contributions to the CMA provide 60% of the diocesan funds each year.

What is it that we are contributing too?

Some goes to Catholic Charities to support their programs for the needy. Some goes to support hospital and prison chaplains along with college ministers. Some goes to support youth ministry in our diocese.

Some goes to support the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as they pool the resources to help each diocese in its ministry. Some goes to support the Vatican.

Some of it is used to support us as a parish. The diocese provides us administrative support to keep us up on civil laws and regulations. Our diocese has an office of Evangelization and Catechesis that supports our parishes and schools in educating our children. They provide resources for our RCIA program for

people who wish to become Catholic. They help us provide marriage preparation for couples preparing to marry.

Ask yourself what is God calling you to contribute?

Last year we moved from having six separate goals to one combined goal. We also stepped up our efforts to promote the CMA. The results were incredible. We went from raising around \$36,700 the year before to raising over \$56,000 in one year. Many people increased their contributions. Others who hadn't giving recent years gave. People who had never given gave (including one very large donation.) Coming together as one we met our goal for the first time.

Now we face a new year. Each year the diocese calculates the goals based on number of households, past contributions, number of people attending church, and median income data. The way this works out this year is our goal is actually down about \$500 to \$54,442.

Does that mean we can all give less? Not really. Each year a few parishioners pass away and some might move away decreasing

the number of contributors. Of course, hopefully some new people have also joined our parish in the last year.

There may be some people who, because of lost jobs or other changes, might not be able to contribute as much, if at all, this year. Of course, some might be able to give more.

Pray about it. What is God calling you to contribute? It's not about seeing what is left over after you have a lot of fun. Pay your own bills, take care of your own needs, but then give according to what God calls you to give.

Whatever you might be able to give, more, less, or the same it is appreciated.