

SUNDAY 26 (A) (2020)

A) PARABLES

- Jesus is often portrayed as a great teacher
- yet he taught with great simplicity
- a technique he used very often was to tell stories
- very simple stories drawn from everyday life
- the stories were not told just to entertain
- they were intended to help the listener reflect on his or her own experience
- to face truths, to examine their conduct, and often to change it

B) THE VINEYARD

- The Gospel is another parable about the vineyard, which stands for the people of Israel
- once again, Jesus is speaking to his own people, particularly the leaders, the ones who paid lip-service to the worship of God, but did not translate his will into practice, into right living.
- He tells them a very simple story about two sons, one of whom said yes to his father but did not do as he was asked,
- and the other said no to begin with, then thought better of it and did what his father had asked him to do.
- Jesus asks the chief priests and elders of the people, "Which of the two did the father's will?"
- The answer is obvious.
- But in answering the question, the chief priests condemn themselves.
- They are members of the Chosen People, they are its religious leaders, and yet they are the ones who are the Lord's greatest opponents.
- They are like the second son who appeared to obey his father but then refused to do so.
- They are the ones who had listened to the preaching of John the Baptist but had then ignored and discredited him.
- They were so certain of their own knowledge and thought they had nothing to learn.
- They were so sure of their own righteousness that they felt they had no need for repentance and conversion.

C) THE FIRST SON

- Jesus tells them quite bluntly that tax-collectors and prostitutes are making their way into God's Kingdom before you.
- these, the ones society had rejected, are like the first son, who said no and then thought better of it.
- They had been leading sinful lives, it is true, but they had undergone a true conversion, a real change of heart.
- They had listened to God's call, as it came to them through John the Baptist and through Jesus himself.
- They had repented and they had experienced the compassion and forgiveness of God.

D) WHICH SON ARE WE?

- Matthew recounts this parable not just for our entertainment, but for our reflection too
- where do we fit in? which son are we?
- More than likely we may see ourselves as resembling both sons
- one of them said yes but did not do the father's will
- are there times when our words and actions don't match up?
- times when we profess our faith and our love on a Sunday, but don't live it out very well during the week?
- and then, are there times when we do recognise our need for repentance and a change of heart?
- in that case we become like the other son, who did recognise that he had done wrong and thought better of it
- and if that is the case, we know that we can be absolutely certain of the forgiveness and mercy of God
- Just listen once again to the beginning of today's Responsorial Psalm:

Lord, make me know your ways.

Lord, teach me your paths.

Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:

For you are God my Saviour.

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