

October 5, 2014 – 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A  
*Harvest Time Dialog*

Last weekend my wife, Pat, and I visited with my relatives in Chicago.

One special relative that we met with was my 92 year old uncle.

He stills drives a car!

Most of our time with the relatives was spent talking over meals.

Our give-and-take dialogs were mostly about memories of past family events.

The weather for the trip was warm and sunny.

As we traveled along Interstate 94 across Michigan we saw many, many farmlands and it was obvious that it was harvest time.

I can recall seeing corn, lots of corn, apples, pumpkins and grapes on the grapevines in the *vineyards*.

*Harvest in the vineyards!* Hmmm. How fitting a visual setting for today's Scripture readings.

*Dialog with family!* How fitting an experience to fit with today's readings.

I would like to use those two concepts - *dialog* and *vineyards* - to tie together ideas from our readings.

Probably the oldest of today's readings is the psalm.

Many of the psalms that we sing here at Mass give praise to God.

Some incorporate some wise sayings or ask for blessings on the king.

Today's particular psalm is considered a "lament", a *dialog* with God where the psalm writer was complaining and hoping for God's blessings.

A complaint may not particularly fit our mood but a lament psalm is an opportunity for us to sympathize with the complaints of today, possibly feel in solidarity with today's complainer, and maybe even lead us to serving the complainer to somehow alleviate their anxiety.

You can catch the feelings as I read a few select lines of the psalm.

*[Some of these lines were not used in today's portion of the psalm.]*

**2 O Shepherd of Israel, lend an ear,  
you who guide Joseph like a flock!**

*[yes, that's the same Joseph we heard about in last week's Generations of Faith]*

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**3B Stir up your power, and come to save us.**

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**7 You have left us to be fought over by our neighbors;**

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**9 You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
you drove out nations and planted it.**

**10 You cleared out what was before it;  
it took deep root and filled the land.**

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**14 The boar from the forest strips the vine;  
the beast of the field feeds upon it.**

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**20 LORD God of hosts, restore us;  
light up your face and we shall be saved.**

*Dialog and vineyards.*

The psalmist was complaining to God. It's OK to complain to God.

It's OK for us to let God know our every feeling.

In turn, is **also** great for us to listen to God speaking with us.

*Dialogs go both ways!*

In today's reading from the prophet Isaiah, we heard a part of God's side of the *dialog*..

Oh, there it was God's turn to complain.

Yes, God had indeed planted the *vineyard* but the people yielded only wild grapes.

They had not lived up to *God's* plan or *God's* hopes,  
had not listened to *God's* commands.

The *dialog* between *God* and us continues in the *Gospel* where *Jesus* tells us another parable about *vineyards*.

Upon hearing *Jesus*, his audience condemns how the people of the parable had treated *God's* messages and messengers.

They heard the story but did not recognize their role in it.

*Jesus* ends the *dialog* by saying: "Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of *God* will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit."

Echoes of our reading from *Isaiah*!

Echoes of our reading from the burgundy booklet of just two days ago!

Do you recall the two questions from the burgundy booklet?

1. What is the fruit that I'm supposed to be producing for the Lord?
2. How am I using the gifts I've been given?

The *dialog* continues in today's *Scriptures*.

The people of the psalm complained to *God*.

*God* complains about the people.

Then *St. Paul* manages to pull it all together for us - more *dialog*.

"Brothers and sisters: Have no anxiety at all, but in everything,  
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,  
make your requests known to *God*."

Then the peace of *God* that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in *Christ Jesus*."

Yes, *St. Paul* strongly encourages our *dialog* with *God*!

What I gather from all of this is:

1. If we want to complain to *God*, do it.
2. If we wish to thank or praise *God*, do it.
3. If we don't feel like talking with *God*, do it anyway!
4. *Then*, as we *dialog* with *God*, listen to *God's* side of the story as well.

5. Finally, find time frequently (- could that possibly mean daily? -) to read Scripture to get *God's* side of the story.

Some people would call this "*dialog*" with *God*.

Some would call it "prayer".

Some would call it "an encounter with *God*".

Me? I would just call it a blessing for us to be relating with the Lord.

Why don't we all have a little *dialog* with our Lord - right now!

PS

Thursday afternoon was when this homily was pulled together.  
In reading the Sunday Scriptures there was Ps 80, our psalm for today.  
We had just prayed that psalm on Thursday morning.  
Such a coincidence!

We were also reading that psalm this week as part of the Scripture class  
homework assignment.

Such a coincidence!

So, that's how Psalm 80 got center stage in today's homily.

PPS

Friday afternoon brought our little burgundy book for Stewardship.  
The Scripture for Friday was Mt 21:33-43.

Did you possibly recognize that today's Gospel was a replay of that  
Scripture?

Here's how the little burgundy ended the Gospel discussion:

"What is the fruit that I'm supposed to be producing for the Lord?  
How am I using the gifts I've been given?"

Such a coincidence!