

Peace is...being responsible

Philippians 4: 6-9 *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.”*

Matthew 21: 33-43 *“Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people... 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.”*

Reflection:

In the first reading, when God looked for the crop of grapes, why did it bring forth wild grapes? What are we called to do to ensure a good harvest? Have I been diligent in serving God in the way He has called me?

In the gospel reading, why was the kingdom of God taken away from them? Have we been good stewards of our country?

What needs to happen in our country to restore a culture of morality? How am I affected by the culture we live in? What am I doing to transform it, so that we are building a culture of life? How can we reverse the driving force of greed and selfishness that is steering our country in the wrong direction?

We must remember that **freedom does not exist without responsibility**. Freedom does not mean we can do or say whatever we want. “There is no true freedom except in the service of what is good and just. The choice to disobey and do evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to ‘slavery of sin.’”¹

We have a serious responsibility to vote in the upcoming election. As Catholics, this means we are called to research the issues and vote for the person of integrity who will work for justice and peace.

Will we put the wrong people into public office by our apathy – our negligence – our failure to be involved and research all the issues?

When you look at the direction our country has taken, are you reminded of the Israelites who disobeyed God’s law and strayed from the covenant He made with them?

“A healthy church is committed to biblical principles, lived out in loving community, where godly relationships and ministry practices lead to life-giving growth for all.”²

We can positively affect our community in the way we live our daily life. We can affect the larger community, the direction our country takes, by how we vote.

Action:

- **Attend the presentation on voting as Catholics, called “Faithful Citizenship,” which will be held in the Mural Room at St. John on Thursday, October 9, at 7:00 p.m. See flyers for details.**
- **Pray that God guides our country and the consciences of our voters.**³
- **Vote responsibly on November 4th!**

“Father, your love for us surpasses all our hopes and desires. Forgive our failings, keep us in your peace and lead us in the way of salvation.”

(taken from today’s opening prayer.)

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1733, p.430. Quote within taken from Romans 6:17. ² taken from “Church Life: By Convenience, Contract or Covenant?” by Stephen Macchia, printed in *Church Executive Magazine*, April, 2008.

³ go to www.sjbcatholicparish.org/peace-justice.php for link to Novena for Faithful Citizenship.