

## HOMILY 27<sup>TH</sup> SUN OT YRA 2017

How many of you are familiar with the sculpture of David by Michelangelo? I would guess that it is one of the most famous pieces of sculpture ever created. How many of you have seen the original in Florence? It is overwhelming. It is 18 feet tall and carved out of one piece of marble. The piece of marble that became David was rejected by the artist Agostino di Duccio 40 years earlier. He was commissioned to carve a sculpture of David or one of the prophets and he concluded it could not be done using this piece of marble. Obviously Michelangelo saw something that Agostino di Duccio did not. That is the way God sees each one of us. He does not see just the block of wood, the way we appear today, he sees our potential, what we can become.

We hear the parable of the vineyard in the Gospel today. The landowner leases the vineyard to tenants. They have all of the raw materials they need to have a very productive vineyard, and apparently they are able to work the vineyard to produce a lot of grapes. But they get off track along the way. They forget that the vineyard belongs to someone else and they have to pay rent. The vineyard represents our world. God has given us everything we need to become the person he is calling us to become, not just the raw materials, but the intelligence, the insight, the gifts and talents, the people we need to produce great things. But sometimes we get off track. We forget that everything comes from God and we need to use all of these gifts for the glory of God. It is not enough to be tenants, to be Catholic; we have to produce good fruit.

In the parable, the land owner sends his son to collect the rent. The people decide to kill the son, the rightful heir to the vineyard, and they think that somehow the land owner will just give the vineyard to them. How ridiculous is that? It seems as though if they had thought about it for two minutes they would have realized that it was a ridiculous idea. Sometimes we get confused as well. We get so caught up in our daily activities and business and make some bad decisions. In the second reading, St. Paul tells

us to pray about everything. That is how we can avoid making ridiculous decisions. As the Gospel reminds us, Jesus is the stone that the builders rejected, who has become the cornerstone of our lives. The cornerstone is laid at the beginning of the foundation. If the cornerstone is straight and square, the building will be straight and square.

Within the vineyard of our world, most valuable gift that God has given us is the gift of human life. The Catholic Church teaches us that we are to respect the dignity of all human life from the moment of conception to the time of natural death. That means all human life. If we remember that Jesus is our cornerstone and bring everything to prayer, I think we can discern how God is calling us to treat others. We need to protect the unborn, probably the most vulnerable. They have no voice in the world, only ours. But the Catholic Church does not disappear when the baby is born. It applies to the mentally ill, addicts, immigrants, refugees, those in our country illegally, those belonging to other ethnic groups and religions. We need to pray about how we treat all of these individuals and groups, and discern how we are called to treat them with dignity and respect.

When we make ourselves the cornerstone of our lives we get into trouble. If we remember that Jesus is the cornerstone, we will remain on track. Do you see the potential in each human being that you meet as God sees them? Or are you like Agostino di Duccio when he could not see the potential in that block of marble, or you like Michelangelo who could see a potential sculpture of David in that block of marble. Without Michelangelo's vision, we would have been deprived of a great work of art. We need to remember that Jesus is the cornerstone of our lives. If we discern with him how we are to treat all human beings in our world with dignity and respect, we will stop making ridiculous decisions. We can bear good fruit.