

March 17, 2017

Genesis 37: 3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a

Matthew 21: 33-43, 45-46

Both of today's readings provide excellent object lessons in the destructive power of envy. Wanting what another has, whether it's fame or fortune, power or prestige, can lead to far more insidious evils. Being desirous of that which legitimately belongs to someone else means we're not happy, we're far from content. As in these two instances, envy frequently links arms with greed to form a diabolical duo. This sinister pairing has caused wars, divided families and led to lifelong bitterness and resentment.

In another context, envy can also be a convenient pretext for doing little or nothing in our spiritual lives. It becomes a handy rationalization when we tell ourselves what great things we could do if only we were blessed with so-and-so's gifts and talents. That saves us the trouble of discovering what our own gifts and talents are and how they might be put to use to better God's world and the people in it.

I wonder how we would feel if we presented someone with a gift, elegantly wrapped, and years later received it back, dust covered but still elegantly wrapped. Annoyance wouldn't begin to cover our reaction. God may feel precisely the same way. Before this Lent ends, maybe we have a bit of unwrapping to do.

**Reflection Questions:**

1. Do I possess envy or greed that I need to unwrap this Lent?
2. What is one gift or talent that I put to use to better God's world and the people in it?

*Reflection by Deacon Brian Nosbusch*