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Homily Opening Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family

Pope Francis

Opening the two-week extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family, Pope Francis warned participants against the temptations of hypocrisy, pride and greed, urging them instead to serve the church with "freedom, creativity and hard work." During an Oct. 5 Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said, "We can thwart God's dream if we fail to let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives us that wisdom that surpasses understanding and enables us to work generously with authentic freedom and humble creativity." Pope Francis' homily drew on the

"The Lord is asking us to care for the family, which from the beginning has been an integral part of his loving plan for humanity."

day's reading from the Gospel of Matthew (21: 33-43), in which Jesus describes the people of God as a vineyard farmed by tenants who betray its owner and seek to take it over for themselves. Evidently addressing his words to the 184 bishops and 69 others who would take part in the synod, the pope said Jesus aimed his parable at the "chief priests and the elders of the people, in other words the experts, the managers," whose job it was to "nurture, tend and protect" God's people. "We are all sinners, and we too can be tempted to take over the vineyard, because of that greed that is always present in us human beings. God's dream always clashes with the hypocrisy of some of his servants," the pope said. The synod is slated to discuss a range of "pastoral challenges of the family" in preparation for a larger world synod in October 2015, which will make recommendations to the pope. Pope Francis spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation of his homily follows, copyright © 2014 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

Today the prophet Isaiah and the Gospel employ the image of the Lord's vineyard. The Lord's vineyard is his "dream," the plan that he nurtures with all his love like a farmer who cares for his vineyard. Vines are plants that need much care!

God's "dream" is his people. He planted them and nurtured them with patient and faithful love, so that they can become a holy people, a people who bring forth abundant fruits of justice.

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