

***Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time***  
***October 8, 2023***  
***Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant***

*“Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will respect my son.’” (Matthew 21:37)*

Allow me to begin our reflection this day with a question: “Why did the landowner send his son?” More specifically, why would he do this after the way the tenants had already dealt with his other servants? It could be proposed that the landowner is naive. He lacks the ability to fully understand the seriousness of this situation from prior experiences. Another proposition could likewise be made asking if more servants could be sent to spare the landowner from sending his son?

To assist us in answering the question concerning the sending of the son, we must first state clearly this parable is a metaphor for God the Father and His relationship with His children, the people of Israel. We understand this through the various comparisons highlighting actual events present within salvation history. First, the vineyard is the nation of Israel. God the Father is the landowner. The tenants are the religious leaders. The servants are the Old Testament prophets, kings and judges. Finally, the son is Jesus, the Son of the Father. We know God the Father would send various representatives to His people reminding them of their covenant relationship in which their ancestors vowed to follow Him in all aspects of their lives. Despite all of these, the people still do not fully repent, thus leading to the sending of Jesus, His Son.

Yet even knowing all of this, I still ask the question: “Why did he send his son?” Many church scholars will say the parable finds its meaning in God’s love for His children. This love is still active despite the rejection He suffers from them by their choosing to serve other gods from various nations. I agree with this answer, but ask yourself the question: “Would you do the same; would you send your child?”

I believe it is in answering this question which opens the door to allow us to answer the initial question as it relates to God the Father. You work to purchase land, you personally build a house on this land, you provide all of the necessary utilities for the house. You purchase all of the appliances and furniture. You set the house up to be lived in and then you rent it out to another family. You send a friend to collect the rent and they leave empty handed after receiving a beating. You choose to send more friends and each one experiences similar and sometimes even worse treatment from the renters. Now, ask yourself, are you going to send your child to collect the rent knowing how the renters will most definitely treat your child? Why would a parent hesitate? I propose we would hesitate because we know of the horror of murder, especially the murder of someone’s child. Saint John Chrysostom, in a homily on this parable, explained that Jesus wanted us to understand the horrific action which will be taken by the religious leaders. They will choose to murder the only Son of a very generous Father who has provided them with everything they need. However, before we think the Jewish religious leaders barbaric for this action of murder, please remember, we are no better than they are. We do the same thing, yet in an unbloody manner, each time we choose to commit one mortal sin. My family, we could possibly be examples of modern-day tenants. For even after we acknowledge just how much the Father has provided for us, we can choose to murder the Father’s Son by our sinful actions. The same action I consider horrific when done by another, may be the same action I gleefully commit myself.