

## **OCTOBER 4, 2020 – 27<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

At the time of Jesus in Palestine, it was common to have absentee landowners. They rented their estates and collected the rental payment at the right time. The cultivators usually gave the landowner the produce with money or a certain amount of the fruit or crop. Therefore, this parable was a casual story which everybody easily understood what Jesus was talking about. People like to listen to Jesus, because he was a story teller. However, the chief priests and Pharisees were upset because they knew that Jesus was speaking about them through the stories. In the parable, the vineyard is the nation of Israel, and its owner is God. The cultivators are the religious leaders of Israel. The messengers who were sent successively are the prophets sent by God. Most of the messengers were rejected and killed by the religious leaders of Israel. Finally the son who came last is none other than Jesus himself.

This story tells us two things: the generosity of God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Firstly, it shows us that how generous God is. God trusts all of us, as the owner of the vineyard entrusted it to the cultivators. God wants us to cultivate his vineyard as we like. He doesn't want to direct us what to do, one by one. He respects our ability. He wants us to plan our events, and fulfill them successively. He respects our free will. Even though he wants us to do the right things all the time, he wants us to choose them by our choice, not by his force. Therefore, he is very patient. The landowner gave the cultivators chance after chance to respond to his appeal. Even though they killed his messengers, he didn't punish them right away. Rather he gave them chance after chance. Until the last moment, he gave them another chance. Just like that, even though we make mistakes God waits until we come back to him and gives us chance after chance.

Secondly, this story tells of the sacrifice of Jesus. Nobody will put their own son into danger. Nobody wants to lose one's own son. Neither did God. However, he never gave up trusting his people. Therefore, his last action was to put his son into the hands of his

people. He wanted his people to come back to him. He gave his people another chance. The Son knew how much his father loved his people. He did not die because he was compelled to die by his Father, but he went willingly and with open eyes to death. Both the Father and the Son loved his people so much.

If we are sinful, God will punish us. However, before he punishes us, he will give us chance after chance, and he himself will be suffering for the sake of us. He never gives up on us.

Jesus was sent to save us. Jesus was rejected by people, but he became the cornerstone of our faith. Being rejected, being despised, suffering and dying was not in vain. It produces a lot of fruits. Showing the example, Jesus wants us to follow him in the way to love our neighbors, our brothers and sisters.

Some times we may be rejected by our neighbors. We may be despised by them. But we know that the stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. If we never give up our love for them, as God does, we will become the cornerstone of building up strong friendships with our neighbors. If we keep our trust in Jesus, we can be used as a cornerstone in accomplishing the kingdom of God.

***Fr. James***