

Landowner and Tenants Second Week of Lent Friday, March 21, 2014 8:15 AM
Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a; **Mt 21:33-34, 45-46** (Being fruitful in every possible way:
materially, spiritually, morally, psychologically, fruitful, increasing the bounty of God's
creation.)

“So the Pharisees knew Jesus was speaking about them.”

Well, yes, but not only about them. This parable applies in general. What it's saying is that God is like a landowner who leases out his land to tenants. The tenants are everybody on earth. **Everybody is a tenant; nobody owns the earth. God is the owner of the earth.** Now we may pretend we own things, but remember what our laws say, everything ends at death. When we die we own nothing, except **an accounting for how we have used all the things God has given us.** And the point of this parable is that **God really wants produce.** He wants something from all that he has given. He expects a return—he expects a return. **That return is about building the kingdom of God;** that's the return.

“What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?” This is a dire statement really about **God's judgment on those who don't do his work,** his work in building the kingdom. It involves everything, **making human life prosperous for everybody,** extending the blessings of God to all. It involves also, of course, **nurturing the vineyard itself,** not just taking what you can take out of it and leaving it. So it's about being **fruitful in every possible way: materially, spiritually, morally, psychologically fruitful, increasing the bounty of God's creation.**

This is a very **serious challenge.** We might just blow it off and think that, well, it can't be that serious because, after all, just look at the history of the World. Well that's the whole problem. The history of the world is the history of people who take from the vineyard, like these tenants, kill off the messengers. Not just the Jewish people; this is not just about Jews.

This is about people. This is about the way history has been led. Ultimately, of course, the **killing of the son refers exactly, of course, to Christ.**

Who are the new tenants? Well, the **new tenants** are anybody who is willing, **anybody who is willing to do God's work.** Every generation is given this new challenge. This isn't just about the time of Christ. **This is about every age.** Every age people have to wake up and look at the creation as a wonderful gift, but a gift entailing responsibility. And that responsibility is **being responsible to work for the owner of the creation,** who is God, to do his work, to spread his largesse over all of his people, which is all inclusive. So we have a lot of work to do.