

Jesus describes a situation not rare in Israel. The nation was as politically and economically troubled as it is today. Wealthy absentee landlords were common. Labor problems abounded. Some tenant-farmers working for low wages

declined to pay rents. Rent strikes are not a 21st century invention.

Thus, when the landlord sent his agents and even his son to pick up his rents, the hapless fellows were often abused and even murdered. Christ's audience had read of such incidents in the Jerusalem Times over coffee and bagels. They nodded their heads in understanding.

The vineyard was a stand-in for Israel's people. The owner is God. The farmers are the rulers and priests who run the country. The servants are the prophets down through the centuries. Their murders make up an unbroken obituary column throughout the Scriptures. The son is Jesus the Christ.

The tale tells of God's confidence in people. He loans His land to us. He does not stand over us like a bullying cop nor even a watchful one. He is patient with us too. He sends us not one messenger but many. Even, when we ignore them, He, unlike ourselves, will suffer insults for a long time. A novel's hero says it is not the peace of God that surpasses understanding but rather the pain He is willing to endure from our sins.

But God is not to be trifled with. He is equal parts tremendous lover and exacting judge. The story does warn of a time when God will call in all the chips owed to Him. If we don't make up, the land will be given to others. We will be losers with our noses pressed on the glass looking in at the party.

The Parable of the Tenants tells us what Jesus thought about Himself. The agents who preceded Him were the prophets. Yet, exalted as they were, they were but errand boys. For there is only one Son. He is the Christ. Do you see now it is not enough to say the Nazarene was a great man? One must choose whether He is divine or a madman or something worse.

This parable contains one of the clearest claims Jesus ever made to being an original. He considers Himself miles above the greatest prophet. He is without peer. Language betrays us when we try to speak correctly of Him.

Matthew's Gospel tells us of the sacrifice of Jesus. Even though He knew the outcome, He went to His rendezvous with death with both eyes at full attention. He was not a passive participant in His own destruction. He was not a Billy Budd. Herman Melville, Budd's creator, would laugh at such a comparison. Gary Cooper's role in High Noon fits Him better.

Jesus the Christ is what He was yesterday and will be tomorrow: none other than the Second Person of the Holy Trinity.

The world says to us, "Follow me and fit in." Jesus says, "Follow me and stand out." (Max Lucado) Make your choice.

Jesus does not want us to go where the path may lead. He wants us to go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

NEWS

◆ Life Chain, Sunday, October 5, 2 p.m.

The annual **Life Chain**, a pro-life prayer and witness event, will take place this year in cities across the United States and Canada on Sunday October 5. Life Chain involves an hour of silent prayer and public witness and will take place from **2 to 3 p.m.** In Canada approximately 30,000 people participate each year, carrying signs that say, "Abortion harms women," "Abortion kills children" and "Adoption, the loving option." Closest Location to us: Bayview /Finch corner

◆ **Celebrating the Richness of Humanae Vitae: A Buried Treasure: The Church's Teaching on Sexuality and Marriage:** to be held at the University of St. Michael's College, Sam Sorbara Auditorium, Brennan Hall at 81 St. Mary St. Toronto, on Saturday November 15, 2008. Speakers include: Archbishop Prendergast, Cale Clarke, Mark Mallett, Dr. Maria Draw, and Fr. Tom Lynch along with several witness couples. Archbishop Collins will celebrate the closing Mass at 5: 30. Registration starts at 8:00 am. Cost is \$5.00 – Lunch \$8:00 for those who preregister or bring your own lunch. Call 905-427-6137 or email humanaevitae40@gmail.com for tickets.

◆ Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Married couples: You deserve a weekend to celebrate being together; to rediscover each other and focus on ways to make your relationship even better. A Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend offers this opportunity. Consider giving each other or another couple that you know the gift of a weekend away from daily pressures; time to be with each other and with God on a Marriage Encounter Weekend. Upcoming Weekend Date: October 24-26, 2008 For further information or registration please contact: **David and Lucy Adams 905-470-9590 or [emailadamsffirogers. Com](mailto:emailadamsffirogers.com)**

◆ **"A wedding anniversary getaway"** is being held at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre Oct 24-26. This marriage enrichment weekend will include a special blessing for celebrating couples as well as comfort, fine food, a program and privacy to talk about the significant times they have had as a married couple. For more information telephone: 905-278-5229.