

Rotten kids! One says he'll do it, and then he doesn't; the other says he won't and then he does. Rotten kids! And you can bet the parents will blame themselves: "Maybe working in the vineyard was too much to ask; we should have just had them take out the garbage." Many parents figure they've done a good job if they can just get their kids to wash their hands! Kids have a high tolerance for dirt. You can tell that Mass was not created by parents. When the time comes for the washing of the hands, out of all the people available to do the job, the last ones parents would give it to would be children. They usually give me about three drops. And these kids in the Gospel--Whatever becomes of kids like this? I can guess their careers: the one who says he won't ever do it and then does will sell used cars. And the one who says he definitely will and then does not will become an elected government official. And if they need extra money, they can both go into weather forecasting.

Who are these two sons really? They represent religious leaders and social outcasts. The leaders say to God, "Yes, we will serve; we will work the vineyard." But then they don't; they don't care. The outcasts--tax collectors and prostitutes--they said to God, "No, we will not serve; we'll do what we want." But then they repent and they do work in the vineyard of the Lord. Jesus says the real heroes are not the religious leaders who serve themselves, but the scum who repent their sins and seek God. Jesus says to the scribes and pharisees, "Tax collectors and prostitutes will get to heaven before you." Used car salesmen, politicians, weather forecasters, your in-laws, single parents, gay and lesbian couples, illegal aliens, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Iranians, lawyers, yes even national league baseball fans--these will enter heaven first if, like the second son, they return to the vineyard after having said no.

So, there's good news and bad news. The bad news is, if we say to God, "Yes, I will serve," and then we don't, we'd better step aside, because the bus to heaven doesn't make this stop. But the good news is, if you're a sinner and you repent, jump on board, there's room for you. But first, wash your hands.