

Homily for the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, A, 7/11/20

Everybody loves a good story! A story can entertain us, encourage us, make us think and even change our hearts and our ways of thinking. The Bible, the Word of God is the greatest story ever told! And Jesus was the most outstanding storyteller in all the Bible.

Let us now look at the story Jesus tells us in today's Gospel reading. This short parable is only nine verses long. (Notice I chose the shorter reading in Matthew's Gospel today as the additional words of the reading are Matthew's interpretation of the parable.) What is Jesus telling us in this parable of the sower? *"The sower went out to sow some seeds in his field and some seeds fell on the path where birds ate it up and some fell on rocky ground which withered it and some fell on thorns which choked it and some fell on rich soil which produced fruit, a **harvest** of a hundred, sixty or thirtyfold."*

I think the point Jesus is making today is that the seed is to the earth what the Word of God is to the human heart. Just as the soil is barren without seeds, so our lives are barren without the Word of God. Why? The Word of God is a pure and lasting font for our spiritual life. In fact, the Church has always venerated the Bible, the Sacred Word of God. Think about it -- we could just go to Mass and receive Holy Communion and simply go home but our Mass, our Sacred Liturgy has two parts that unite as one worshipping service. The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. If I can use the analogy of going to someone's home for dinner --one would not just come into the home and sit down and eat the meal, no there is the time of friendship and sharing of life and stories that proceed the meal. If one just came in and ate and left I do not think that person would be invited back again, do you!

In our liturgy the Word of God continually calls us to a better and more fruitful life. But God does not talk to us as a dictator would but as a loving father or mother talks to their children. God's Word is so gentle and weak, and as defenseless as a seed falling in the soil. Yet, God's Word is more powerful than the most important person we can think of. Why? Because God's Word can and does change the world for it changes people's hearts.

But let me make another point God does not just speak to us in the Sacred Scriptures but God also speaks to us in the events and people in our lives. For example, listen to this story Mother Theresa tells about herself. She says so often she walked around and avoided the sick and the dying on the streets of Calcutta until one day it dawned on her that Christ himself was present in them. It finally dawned on her what Jesus meant in Mt. 25: "*Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters you are doing unto me!*" She now realized Jesus was there in the very sick and the dying that she was walking around and ignoring instead of helping them. With this new insight Mother Theresa in her own way changed not only herself but also the world and how we should look at the needy! So do not let us forget that the words of Scripture speak to the events of our own lives and help us to understand what God is saying in those events in our lives.

Think about it! Look back at some of the events of your life and you will see God speaking in them. For example, how did you meet the spouse you married? How many people had you met before and why was this meeting different? Simply, God was working and you were listening!

Again think about it we will not be judged by results but only by the efforts we made. "*And the seed fell on good ground and produce a harvest of one hundredfold, sixty or thirty!*"

Yes, everybody loves a good story and WE ARE THE STORY!