

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-9

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

HOMILY OF POPE ST JOHN PAUL II (TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN, EXCERPT)

15 July 1990

In the biblical texts of this 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Almighty appears to us clothed with tenderness and attention, generous with the gifts of salvation towards humanity. He patiently accompanies the people he has chosen for himself; he faithfully guides over the centuries the Church "new Israel of the present age, which walks in search of the future and permanent city" (*Lumen gentium* , 9). He speaks and acts, he gives without measure and without repentance, he intervenes in our daily affairs even when we are weak and do not correspond to his free and generous love for him.

However, man has the tremendous possibility of making the divine initiative useless and rejecting his love. Our "yes", free adherence to his life proposal, is indispensable for the plan of salvation to be fulfilled in us.

Let us reflect on the parable of the sower. It helps us to better understand this providential reality and to wisely ponder the weight of the responsibility that falls on each one in making the seed of the Word, widely spread in our hearts, ripen. The seed we speak of is the word of God; it is Christ, the Word of the living God. It is a question of a seed, fruitful

and effective in itself, gushed from the inexhaustible source of Trinitarian love. However, making it bear fruit depends on us, it depends on the welcome that each one reserves for it. Often the man is distracted by too many interests; innumerable reminders reach him from all sides and it is difficult for him to distinguish, among so many voices, that of the one Truth that makes us free.

It is necessary to become available land without thorns or stones, but tilled and weeded with care. It depends on us to be that good land, in which "the seed bears fruit and produces now one hundred, now sixty, now thirty" (Mt 12:23). How great then is the responsibility of the believer! How numerous are the opportunities offered to those who welcome and preserve this mystery! Blessed is he who opens all of himself to Christ, the seed that makes life fruitful!

I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, to grow in God's desire, I encourage you to generously accept the invitation that today's liturgy addresses to us. May you always correspond to the impulses of grace and bear abundant fruits of holiness.

continued over page ►

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/
Homily?



Head: What distracts your attention from God?



Heart: God is described as having “tenderness and attention”. Does this feel true to you? Do you feel like you have God’s “attention”?



Hands: How can we ensure that our lives are “good land” for the seed?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.