

July 16th, 2017
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:10 – 11.

God's Word achieves what it was sent to do: create a fruitful earth.

Psalm 65:10, 11, 12 – 13, 14.

The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest. (LK 8:8)

2nd Reading: Romans 8:18 – 23.

God has great things in store for us as creation unfolds its purpose.

Gospel: Matthew 13:1 – 23.

God's Word is sown with reckless abundance.

“Blessed are the eyes that see and ears that hear”

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

We find ourselves still on the farm today, even though Jesus removed himself to the boat to get away from the crowd. Remember last week we heard about the yoke and Fr. Dan explained how most yokes come doubled up and that is how Jesus could lighten our load (sharing the “footprints in the sand” poem.

This parable of the sower and the seed is one of the best known parables. I remember the good sisters in grade school always stressing that God is the sower and we had to make sure that we were the “good soil” so as to be fruitful. Not that this is not a legitimate viewing of this parable; but I'd like to have you consider for a moment what if we are the sowers and the seeds we are sewing are the Word of God. Do you have ears to hear and eyes to see?

How indeed would we sow those very valuable seeds that we believe so deeply in? Just like the farmer in today's parable. We would throw them in every direction in huge amounts, to give it our best shot! Right? Will others laugh at us? Look at us like we are crazy? Reject what we have to offer? Sprout shoots and grow? This is the price of being an ambassador of God's Word: some failure, and, when you least expect it, you touch someone and make a difference in our world. For me this is one of the meanings of this parable. Do we have ears to hear, and eyes to see?

As the farmer, there is another detail in the parable we need to address. The word of God is not hydroponic. It does not sprout except in dirt. It needs soil. So what is our responsibility to the earth to see to it that it has a chance to produce the bountiful harvest of God's Glory? Pope Francis certainly claims that human responsibility in his encyclical, *Laudato Si*. Do we have eyes to see, and ears to hear?

How do we nurture the seed in our own hearts, planted by others, but now left to us to flourish? My contention is by doing the best we are capable of, God will see to the rest. God's Word never returns to God fallow and God does what God says God will do. What a God we have! Do we have eyes to see and ears to hear?

So here we are gathered today to celebrate the Eucharist. We have brought our stony paths, our rocky soil, and our thorny bushes from our lives. We tie our suffering to that of Jesus' passion and death believing that like his they will be transformed into an abundant harvest of the resurrection. Do we have eyes to see and ears to hear?

In this way the Eucharist articulates a hope, but a hope based on God's freedom to act/love. The Eucharist asserts that to develop, to nurture hope is to cultivate mystery. We are back to being farmers. Do we have ears to hear and eyes to see?

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

"Pied Beauty." By Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ (an inspiration for me)

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.