

FIFTENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; 2020.

The parable of the sower challenges the hearers to think about how receptive they are to embracing the mysteries of the Kingdom in such a way that the mysteries take root and grow to their full stature. The reflective mind will understand what is being asked and should sufficiently have a degree of self knowledge to know, to use a horticultural term, what soil type they are and what is likely to be the outcome when those mysteries are waiting to be cultivated. The people to which this parable was being told was receiving the seeds of this mystery for the first time, and as we are told often in Scripture, there were those present who would have just walked away, some who would have found the whole thing interesting until something else came along and others who would have been totally transformed. All types of course corresponding to the conditions of the medium in which the seeds are sown.

For the preacher at Mass, he of course is not talking to the crowds. She is not setting forth the mysteries of the Kingdom to the uninitiated. The preacher is like Jesus talking to the disciples, to those who at some point have had the seeds of the mysteries of the Kingdom fall upon them and they have found a soil that is conducive to growth and maturity towards fruitfulness. All of us at some point have moved from being one of the crowd to being a disciple whose turn it is to face the crowds ourselves with the seed of the Kingdom. That doesn't mean of course, to continue the analogy of the parable, that we neglect the ground of our being so that the fruit becomes diseased or weak or bitter; there is still the need to water to feed and to prune. So the important part of the parable for us is in the words of Jesus to His disciples concerns the seeds, the seeds are the word of God. The disciples are to become the sowers, it is imperative therefore that the seeds that they are going to sow, the words that they are going to proclaim are going to be viable. Because in the parable itself the seeds themselves are good, that is not the problem, it is the ground that they land on is the problem and that is something that we cannot control. But what we must be certain of is the quality of the seed, the soundness and correctness and potential of the words that we are scattering before our path.

We must learn the correct language, that combination of words used that bring light and understanding and revelation; that opens up new worlds and new possibilities, and above all Truth; and this language that we speak is

nothing less than the language of Heaven taught to us through the full expression of God in The Word, Jesus and the words of Scripture and the Tradition that flows from them. When we talk about the Incarnation we talk about the person of God being seen in the human face of Jesus, Gods face being turned toward us in Jesus. And it is in Jesus that God speaks to us. Jesus is the personified language of God, the word made flesh. All the words we scatter before our path like seeds should always have something of the quality of Jesus about them, they should be equally at home on our lips as they are on the lips of Jesus, because ultimately they are the words of life. There is nothing that renders our words lifeless as when they are uttered inappropriately or carelessly, or without due reverence or as if the whole of eternity was not a gift to be had. We must be careful to take heed of what Claudius says in Hamlet when he states “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thought never to Heaven go.” The words that tell of our faith, those seeds so full of potential should never be uttered without commitment, or contradict the truth.

Like seeds that are inviable, the moment that they are put out there they become dead on arrival, and it makes no difference if they land on receptive ground, and an opportunity is missed, a potential soul for the Kingdom is lost. We must therefore seek to be more and more like Christ so that it becomes second nature that the second Adam is speaking through us.

And then there is Scripture, the words of The Word of God. Here we have an abundance of seeds to scatter before all situations. An intimate knowledge of Scripture enables the choosing of the right word or teaching for the right situation, and if we are inspired we will in turn make our words equally as inspirational. Chesterton once remarked, “Theologians and philosophers debate about the inspiration of Scripture, but perhaps the most philosophical argument for saying that certain scriptural sayings are inspired is simply that they sound like it.” We have the means to make our case for the Kingdom of God in words that are flat and uninviting or lively and inspirational. When we are passionate about something there is more chance of that passion spreading and becoming infectious.

A few weeks ago we celebrated the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul and I spoke about one of the Orthodox Icons of the Saints that depict them standing

together, shoulder to shoulder. In Peters hand are a set of Keys, the Keys to the Kingdom given to him by Jesus in Matthew Ch 16, and in Pauls hand is a sword which refers us back to Pauls letter to the Ephesians where he encourages the faithful to put on the whole armour of God. The last piece of the armour is the sword which is the word of God. The two, the keys to unlock the mysteries of the Kingdom and the sword which is the word of God, go together. Keys are used to unlock something that is closed and as disciples we are tasked to unlock the mysteries of the Kingdom for all people. But how do we unlock these mysteries? By proclaiming the word of God with words that are full and overflowing with the Holy Spirit.

We might even find that there are some seeds that actually prefer to begin life on a rocky ground. But we will never be able to choose the correct seed if we don't know it exists, in other words with only a cursory knowledge of Scripture we might be missing many an opportunity to make the mysteries of the Kingdom available, so, to use the analogy of Paul we need to be armed to the teeth and wield that sword with confidence and integrity and inspirationally.

We have been given the best seed possible, high in quality and rich in potential. Throw it far and wide liberally, through it indiscriminately, think not on where it lands just make sure that the seed is full of potency and has the best possible chance of producing a productive yield.

AMEN.