

15th Sunday A: The Word of God in Our Life (2020)

Greetings in the Lord!

"Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear" (Matt 13:9). This a kind of exclamation ending challenges all who listens to the parable of the sower. It leads the listener to understand what is heard and to ponder what is perceived.

The parable speaks volumes of God's generosity in communicating his message and the way it is received. When asked by his disciples, the explanation of our Lord Jesus points out the critical dispositions in listening to his Word. It is in itself a homily on the value of receptivity and the condition of one's heart.

But there is something worth reflecting on the parable, the striking character of the sower. The sower in the parable scatters the seeds indiscriminately. He cares to sow the seed regardless of the type of soil. This sower's character reveals that God loves to generously fill the earth and the whole creation with the abundance of his message. This generosity is constant, persistent, and eternal. Gerard Manley Hopkins, an English poet, in his poem, *God's Grandeur*, wrote, "The world is charged with God's grandeur. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil; It gathers to a greatness, like an ooze of oil crushed." His words acknowledge that God generously fills the earth, the whole creation, with his message, whether he is being noticed or taken for granted, received or ignored.

Like the sower, God is determined and generous in every way to communicate Himself to us. There is never a day that God does not speak to us through the world we live in. I believe God is speaking loudly to us through disasters, sufferings, and pandemic of our times. In faith, we can say that he is reawakening our sense of holiness and community, our sense of responsibility and accountability to the whole creation and humanity. I can say this because God acted in this way when his chosen people turned away from his covenant and corrupted them with power and wealth. God speaks through this painful human condition. But will we listen and seek his way?

Also, we especially hear God speaks through the proclamation of the Word of God, in particular, during the celebration of the Sacraments to inform and form hearts. We heard him speak through reading and praying with the Bible. Reading and praying with the Bible immerses oneself in God's workings in the past and in our times. The scriptural passages this Sunday speak to us the power of the Word of God. It is like rain and snow that waters the earth and makes us grow as we carry out God's will in our lives (cf. Is. 55:10-11). It blesses us with abundant growth in our spiritual lives (cf. Ps. 65:10, 11,12-13, 14). And it gives us hope to enjoy the freedom and glory of being children of God in his kingdom (cf. Rom.8:18-23).

But the growth of the Word depends on the receptivity of the soil of one's heart. It draws us to the heart of the sower Himself, who does not force himself to us but determines to sow seed regardless of the condition of the human heart. He instead advocates love, a love that respects freedom and truth!

St. Benedict, Father of Western Monasticism and whose feast day we celebrated yesterday, taught that the most reliable and dependable foundation for the power of the words is God's Word. He wrote, "for what page or word of the Bible is not perfect rule for temporal life." His words remind us to keep the Bible part of our life. He taught us the importance of *Lectio Divine*, the divine readings for prayer.

Let us take the example set by the disciples who came to ask Jesus the meaning of the parable. Let us return to Jesus always — the WORD of GOD — to seek to learn and ponder, meditate, and gain more understanding of his Holy mysteries ever, for in them is life and salvation. And let us heed what Pope Francis advised us in our day and age — "It is time to turn off the television and open the Bible."

"Whoever has ears ought to hear."

In Christ,

Fr. Manny Hewe
Pastor, CCST