

Father John's Gospel Reflection



Gospel

GOSPEL – SUNDAY, 16 JULY, 2017
- Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Matt 13:1-9)

A sower went out to sow.

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered around 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!'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

GOSPEL REFLECTION – SUNDAY, 16 JULY, 2017
- Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Matt 13:1-23)

The parable of the sower.

A parable is a simple story that asks us to think about very important matters: our relationship with others, our place in the world, and how we can be better people. When we read parables, we should ask ourselves: where am I in this story? How am I like the people in the story? What does this story mean for me?

In this parable of the sower, Jesus shows us that there are four types of people that receive his good news. But is Jesus talking only about his followers, or also those Jews and Gentiles who heard Jesus' words and rejected being part of the earlier Christian community - followers of The Way? For Jesus uses the words "disciples" and "crowds". Jesus makes a distinction between the crowds and the disciples. The emphasis is not so much on the ability of the disciples to understand, which they have in part, yet not completely, but on the fact that revelation has been given to them.

This is the first of the parables of Jesus, and here the sower is Jesus. But the focus is not so much on the sower as on the ground - and the different types of ground. Conveniently, Jesus describes the meaning of the parable. Maybe he gives this explanation because the people's eyes were closed and remained closed because they were unwilling to see the full significance of Good News, they did not press Jesus for answers to his parables. Instead they wanted miracles to amaze and entertain them. They did not follow Jesus to be liberated from sin, they followed him in the hope he would liberate them from the Romans, and establish an earthly kingdom.

Some commentators try to interpret the parable without reference to the next section, where Jesus explains why he uses parables. Cf. my comments above.

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1. We, like the sower, have a responsibility to proclaim the message of the kingdom. It is the Word of God that will produce results.
2. We will be aware that not everyone will receive it by faith; that is not our business, our business is to continue to proclaim the good news by word and action.
3. The advance of the kingdom and acceptance of the good news does not occur instantly, but over time. We never 'get it' at first, but there will be gradual progress – don't give up!

Take home Message