

16 July 2017 (15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 64(65):10-14; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23.

### **A sower went out to sow.**

In the next section that we will be reading from in the gospel according to Matthew, we are presented with a series of eight parables speaking about the kingdom of heaven. In many cases the parable starts with the phrase: the kingdom of heaven is like.... This first parable speaks about the way we receive the word of God in our life.

The image Jesus suggests for this first parable is that of a sower who goes out to sow. As he sows the seeds fall on different types of ground resulting in different ways of receiving the seed. A first note in this parable is the fact that the sower is not careful where he is sowing the seed, but plentifully spreads his seed around in the field. This way of sowing will obviously result in waste, but the image Jesus is suggesting is one of superfluous abundance.

Jesus explains that the seed is the word of God and the different environments are the different ways in which we can receive the word of God in our life. One way of reading this parable (and very probably the way the community around Matthew would have understood it) is to point out to different groups of people within the community and beyond. The community of Matthew would have seen itself as being the fertile ground while the other Jews not in the Christian community would be the other types of soil. For us today this type of reading would be a very simplistic approach.

I suggest that it would be much more useful for us today to look at ourselves as being the field receiving the seed of the word of God. Within our life there are moments when we are open to accepting this word that is being sown in us, but at other times we are too shallow or too busy to listen to the word. Perhaps we might choose to let the word of God guide us while we are doing certain activities in our life, and not at other moments.

God is very generous in his invitation to listen to his word and to participate in his life. God generously spreads the seeds of his word in our life. God speaks to us through creation around us, through our relatives and friends, through different events that happen and that we participate in, and also through his word in the bible and through the sacraments. God constantly invites us to be part of a deeper relationship with him, the question we need to ask ourselves is: are we open to accept God's word and let it make fruit within us?

Life can be very busy; there are many claims on our day. We are often busy trying to meet the different needs that arise around us. Do we give enough time to listen and reflect on God's word or do we often find ourselves like the section in the field where there are many rocks and little soil, or too many thorns and weeds that choke the word. For the word of God to make fruit we need to consciously make space for it in our daily life – as we come together to pray as a parish community, in our family and in our private time. The field will only give fruit when the soil is well ploughed, fertilised and watered. How do we look after the field that is our life?

God continues to call us to follow. Let us accept this call and make space for the word of God to produce fruit in our life.

Fr Mario