

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 12, 2020

“Sow for yourselves justice, reap the fruit of piety;
break up for yourselves a new field,
for it is time to seek the LORD,
till he come and rain down justice upon you.”

– Hosea 10:12

We're deep into gardening season, and some of us may be faced with an overabundance of zucchini or tomatoes. It's a perfect time to hear one of Jesus' seed parables that always appear each year in midsummer. Parables usually are deceptively simple, yet if we open ourselves to the story we can learn something about ourselves and be nudged into deeper conversion.

God is confident in us – confident that we will hear God's Word and make it so in our world. In today's brief passage, Isaiah compares God's Word to the rain watering thirsty crops: “my word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will” (55:11). Are we as confident in ourselves?

“The Parable of the Sower” appears in three of the Gospels: Mark 4:1-9; Matthew 13:1-9; and Luke 8:4-8. Each of these Gospels also has passages immediately following which explain why Jesus taught in parables, and which interpret this particular parable, which is a rare thing for Jesus to do. He liked to keep us guessing and wondering. In today's version of the Sower's saga in Matthew, he ends the first telling of the parable by saying: “Whoever has ears ought to hear” (verse 9). Clarence Jordan in his Cotton Patch Gospel paraphrases it: “Now please let *that* soak in!”

One key to grappling with this farming story is to know a bit about broadcast seeding, in which you strew a handful of seeds in an arc. It's a system that allows the seed to go wherever it's blown. Jesus enumerates some possibilities about where it could alight: on the path, on rocky ground, among the thorns, or in rich soil. The first three possibilities come to sad ends. But the final germinating possibility – rich soil – yields impossibly huge results that even our

modern agri-businesses couldn't achieve – despite the advanced farming techniques, bio-engineered seed, eco-friendly weed and insect repellants and fertilizer.

Whenever something improbable, impossible, and/or miraculous seems to be happening in the Gospels, our Reign of God alarm should go off. It's a sign of the abundance and the fullness of the promise breaking into our world. It's a signal that the Kingdom of God can indeed come on earth as it is in heaven, as we pray again and again in the Our Father. It's time for God to break into our world again, or maybe that's already happening.

Meanwhile, Paul reminds us today “all creation is groaning in labor pains” (Romans 8:22) and we ourselves are groaning. We're on pins and needles hoping our “change is gonna come,” as Sam Cooke used to sing. We yearn, we groan for many changes to come. In the African American Christian tradition, groaning or lining is a musical expression of that rumbling hope. Sometimes called Dr. Watts Hymn Singing, it is a plaintive cry for God's healing and help. Here's a link to one of those old meter hymns, “A Charge To Keep I Have” sung by the Rev. Timothy Flemming:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8uV5gmUimQ>

Now that you are in touch with your inner groaning and yearning, you are invited on a journey of hope through this Sunday's home liturgy.

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Opening Hymn

Sing along with **Worthy God – M. Roger Holland II**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXpgSVP7g38>

Leader: In the name of the Father, † and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: *Amen*

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you spoke in parables about those who hear God's word:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you taught that God's word has power for the listener:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you invite us to be open to what we hear from you:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

God of the heavens,
God of the earth,
all creation awaits your gift of new life.
Prepare our hearts
to receive the word of your Son,
that his Gospel may grow within us
and yield a harvest that is a hundredfold.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.

Let the church say – Amen.

Readings for the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

1st Reading – Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ Thus says the LORD: Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats,

¹¹ so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; my word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14

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

¹⁰ You have visited the land and watered it;^{[L][SEP]}
greatly have you enriched it.^{[L][SEP]}
God's watercourses are filled;^{[L][SEP]}
you have prepared the grain.^{[L][SEP]}

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

¹¹ Thus have you prepared the land:
drenching its furrows,^{[L][SEP]} breaking up its clods,^{[L][SEP]}
Softening it with showers,^{[L][SEP]} blessing its yield.^{[L][SEP]}

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

¹² You have crowned the year with your bounty,^{[L][SEP]}
and your paths overflow with a rich harvest;^{[L][SEP]}

³ The untilled meadows overflow with it,^{[L][SEP]}
and rejoicing clothes the hills.^{[L][SEP]}

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

¹⁴ The fields are garmented with flocks,^{[L][SEP]}
and the valleys blanketed with grain.^{[L][SEP]}

They shout and sing for joy.^{[L][SEP]}

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

2nd Reading – Romans 8:18-23

¹⁸ Brothers and sisters: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.

¹⁹ For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God;

²⁰ for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope

²¹ that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

²² We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now;

²³ and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,^{[L] [SEP]} we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.^{[L] [SEP]}

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower.^{[L] [SEP]}

All who come to him will have life forever.^{[L] [SEP]}

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – Matthew 13:1-23 [Short form verses 1-9]

¹ On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea.

² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore.

³ And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow.

⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up.

⁵ Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep,

⁶ and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots.

⁷ Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it.

⁸ But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.

⁹ Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

¹⁰ The disciples approached him and said, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

¹¹ He said to them in reply, “Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted.

¹² To anyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables, because they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.

¹⁴ Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: You shall indeed hear but not understand, you shall indeed look but never see.

¹⁵ Gross is the heart of this people, they will hardly hear with their ears, they have closed their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and be converted, and I heal them.

¹⁶ “But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear.

¹⁷ Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower.

¹⁹ The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart.

²⁰ The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy.

²¹ But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away.

²² The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit.

²³ But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

Sing along with M. Roger Holland II leading the Spiritual,
“Keep Your Eyes on the Prize” –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUTludBxf84>

1. God is certain that the Word won't return to God without completing the heavenly mission. Where do you see that Word transforming our world today?
2. What areas in our society are experiencing the groans of giving birth to something new? What areas of your life are groaning in the newness of life?

3. Where have the seeds of the Gospel landed in your life – on the path, on rocky ground, among the thorns, or in rich loamy soil. Often times, we human beings often have all FOUR of these possibilities working in us at once. Can you identify any paved or rocky or thorny or loamy areas in you?

Ideas for Your Daily Meditations

- Ponder who you could share the Gospel with someone who may not be a church-goer presently.
- In your silent prayer, let Jesus clear away the rocks and thorns in your soil.
- Give voice to your thanksgiving for the places in your life that have yielded rich harvests.

Sing along with “I Know Something About God's Grace,” and W. Clifford Petty:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-cctseKXQs>

Then, move into the intercessions:

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – July 12, 2020 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Presider: Let us put God’s Word into action by praying for the needs of our world.

Worship Leader

1. For our Church, that we Christians take a leadership role in bringing on a new Era of Atonement and Conversion as we make long-term commitments to end Racism and White Supremacy in American society. We pray: **Hear us, O God.** (ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Hear us, O God.**)
2. For Christians everywhere to keep Gospel values foremost in mind as they go about making day-to-day choices and as they preach the Good News by their actions. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
3. For those over the centuries who have taken great personal risk to proclaim the Gospel. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

4. For fruitful gardens and fertile fields: for those who grow food for others and all whose livelihoods are dependent on beneficial weather. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
5. For a world at peace, for peacemakers, and for those who must flee their homes to find peace. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
6. For all those suffering from coronavirus and for the members of the medical community who risk their lives to provide them care. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
7. For the thousands of unsung essential workers must work during this time of emergency. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
8. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
9. For an end to the Death Penalty and Human Trafficking, especially in Georgia. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Amelia Dixon Cornn and Benito Gonzalez for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

Presider: God who has spoken to us through your Son, Jesus, we thank you for your life-giving word. Help us to understand your word and to share it with those who long to hear it. May our words and our actions faithfully proclaim your love. We pray in Jesus' holy name.
LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Sing or recite **The Lord's Prayer**.

Closing Prayer

Give us new life, Lord God,
so that, bound to you in unfailing love,^[L]_[SEP]
we may bring forth fruit that remains.

LET THE CHURCH SAY: AMEN

Sing along with the Staples Singers: "I Know I've Been Changed"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WALTAaw7o-o>

Have a blessed week!