

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

[Isaiah 55.10-11; Rm. 8.18-23; Mt. 13.1-23]

Excerpts from Pope Francis – Angelus - 16 July 2023

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Brothers and sisters, we are familiar with today's Gospel, the parable of the sower. Many of us grew up on the farm, and some grew gardens. "Sowing" is a very beautiful image, and Jesus uses it to describe the gift of his Word. Let us imagine a seed: often, they are tiny, barely visible, but it makes fruit-bearing plants grow. The Word of God is like this: think of the Gospel, a small book, simple and within everyone's reach, that produces new life in those who receive it. Accordingly, if the Word is the seed, we are the soil: we can receive it or not.

But Jesus, the "good sower", *does not tire of sowing it generously*. He knows our landscape, he knows that the stones of our inconstancy and the thorns of our vices can suffocate the Word, yet he hopes, he always hopes that we can bear abundant fruit. This is what the Lord does, and this is what we too are called to do: to *sow tirelessly*. But how can one do this, sow continually without tiring?

Let us take a few examples. Firstly, parents: they sow goodness and faith in their children, and they are called to do so without being discouraged even if at times they seem not to understand or to appreciate their teachings, or if the mentality of the world is against them. The good seed remains. This is what counts, and it will take root in due time.

But if, giving in to mistrust, they give up sowing and leave their children at the mercy of trends and mobile phones, without dedicating time to them, without educating them, then the fertile soil will be filled with weeds. **Parents**, never grow tired of sowing in your children!

Let us look, then, at the young: they too can sow the Gospel in the ruts of everyday life. For example, with prayer: it is a small seed that you cannot see, but with which you entrust all your experiences to Jesus, and then he can make it ripen. But I am also thinking of the time to dedicate to others, to those who are most in need. It may seem wasted. **Instead**, it is holy time, and it does not leave one empty-handed. And I am thinking of those who study: it is true, [studying] is tiring and not immediately fulfilling, like sowing, **but is essential** to building a better future for all.

We have looked at parents, we have looked at the young; now let us look at the sowers of the Gospel: many good priests, religious and laypeople who live and preach the Word of God, often without immediate success.

Let us never forget when we proclaim the Word, that even where it seems that nothing is happening, in reality the Holy Spirit is at work, and the Kingdom of God is already growing, through and beyond our efforts. Therefore, go ahead joyfully! Let us remember the people who placed the seed of the Word of God in our life: each one of us, let us think: “How did my faith begin”? Perhaps it germinated years after we encountered their examples, but it happened thanks to them!

In light of all this, we can ask ourselves: do I sow goodness?

Do I only care about reaping for myself, or do I also sow for others?

Do I sow some seeds of the Gospel in everyday life: study, work, free time?

Do I get discouraged or, like Jesus, do I continue to sow, even if I do not see immediate results?

May the Eucharist help us to be generous and joyful sowers of the Good News.