Wednesday of the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:1-9): On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

"A sower went out to sow"

Fr. Julio César RAMOS González SDB
(Mendoza, Argentina)

Today —in Matthew's Gospel— Jesus begins to introduce us to the mysteries of the Kingdom, in that particular way He so often uses: through parables.

The seeds are the Word proclaimed and the sower is He. He is not trying to sow in the best possible soil to produce an excellent crop. He has come so that "they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10). This is why He does not spare his seeds and generously throws handfuls of them onto the ground, whether it is "on the path" (Mt 13:4), or "on rocky ground" (v.5), or "among thorns" (v.7), or, finally, "on rich soil" (v.8).

Thus, the seeds so generously sown produce the yield permitted by the possibilities of the land. The Second Vatican Council tells us: "The Word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear the Word with faith and become part of the little flock of Christ, have received the Kingdom itself. Then, by its own power the seed sprouts and grows until harvest" (Lumen gentium, 5).

"Those who hear the Word with faith," says the Council. You are used to hearing it, perhaps to reading it and, maybe, to pondering over it; but the fruitfulness of the Word depends on the depth of your faith upon hearing it. Though these fruits are somehow guaranteed by the vital power of the Word-seed, our responsibility to listen attentively to the Word remains just as essential. This is why "Whoever has ears ought to hear" (Mt 13:9).

Today, ask the Lord for the prophet's yearning: "When I found your words, I devoured them; your words were my joy and the happiness of my heart, because I bear your name, LORD, God of hosts" (Jer 15:16).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "The divine sower is also sowing his seed today. He invites us to spread the divine message, by both teaching and example." (Saint Josemaría)

- "The Lord scatters the seed of the word of God freely and with abundance. The sower does not lose heart, for he knows that part of this seed is destined to find 'good soil', namely, ardent hearts capable of receiving the word with willingness, for the benefit of many." (Benedict XVI)

- "The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word? What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 546)