Wednesday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 4:1-20): On another occasion Jesus began to teach by the sea. A very large crowd gathered around him so that he got into a boat on the sea and sat down. And the whole crowd was beside the sea on land. And he taught them at length in parables, and in the course of his instruction he said to them, “Hear this! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed 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 and it produced no grain. And some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit. It came up and grew and yielded thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” He added, “Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear.”

And when he was alone, those present along with the Twelve questioned him about the parables. He answered them, “The mystery of the kingdom of God has been granted to you. But to those outside everything comes in parables, so that ‘they may look and see but not perceive, and hear and listen but not understand, in order that they may not be converted and be forgiven.’”

Jesus said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand any of the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown. As soon as they hear, Satan comes at once and takes away the word sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground who, when they hear the word, receive it at once with joy. But they have no root; they last only for a time. Then when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Those sown among thorns are another sort. They are the people who hear the word, but worldly anxiety, the lure of riches, and the craving for other things intrude and choke the word, and it bears no fruit. But those sown on rich soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

“The sower sows the word”

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench

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Today we hear the “Parable of the Sower” from the Lord’s lips. The scene is totally current. The Lord does not stop “sowing.” Even in our days, there is a multitude that listens to Jesus through the mouth of his Vicar – the Pope –, of his ministers and… of his lay faithful: Christ has granted all of us baptized a share in his priestly mission. There is a “hunger” for Jesus. Never before has the Church been so Catholic, since under her “wings” she shelters men and women from the five continents and of all races. He sent us into the whole world (cf. Mk 16:15) and, despite the shadows of the panorama, the apostolic mandate of Jesus Christ has become a reality.

The sea, the boat and the beaches are replaced by stadiums, screens and modern means of communication and transport. But Jesus is the same today as yesterday. Nor has man changed and his need for teaching in order to love. Today, too, there are those who, by grace and free divine choice – it is a mystery! – receive and understand the Word more directly. Just as there are many souls who need a more descriptive and slower explanation of Revelation.

In any case, God asks us to bear the fruits of holiness. The Holy Spirit helps us to do this, but He does not dispense with our collaboration. First of all, diligence is necessary. If one responds half-heartedly, that is, if one remains on the “border” of the path without fully entering it, one will be an easy victim of Satan.

Secondly, constancy in prayer – dialogue – to deepen the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ: “A saint without prayer…? —I do not believe in such sanctity” (Saint Josemaría Escriva).

Finally, the spirit of poverty and detachment will prevent us from “drowning” along the way. Let's be clear: “No one can serve two masters…” (Mt 6:24).

In Holy Mary we find the best model of responding to God's call.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Care of our soul is just like cultivating the land: pull up what is evil and plant what is good; dig out pride by the root and plant humility; throw away avarice and keep mercy; disdain impurity and love chastity.” (Saint Caesarius of Arles).

- “Throwing seed is a gesture of trust and hope; the work of man is necessary, but then he must enter into a time of waiting, knowing well that numerous factors will be determinative for the good outcomes of the harvest and that the risk of a failure is always lurking. And yet, year after year, the farmer repeats his

gesture and throws his seed." (Benedict XVI)

- "There are as many and varied methods of meditation as there are spiritual masters. Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower. But a method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus." (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, № 2707)