

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
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we hear our Lord teaching the “Sower's parable”. The example is very current. Our Lord is always “sowing”. Lots of people today also listen to Jesus through his Vicar —the Pope—, his ministers and... his faithful laymen and women: Christ has given a share in his priestly mission to all of us, who have been baptized. There is “hunger” for Jesus. Never ever before our Church has been so Catholic, men and women of all races and colors finding cover under its wings all the over the world. He sends us all over the world (cf. Mk 16:15) and, despite the shadows of the panorama, this has become true in Jesus Christ's apostolic commandment.

The sea, the boat and the shore have been replaced by large venues, screens and modern communication and transport means. However, Jesus today is no different than yesterday. Man and his urge to learn how to love have not changed either. Even today there are those who receive and understand the Word more directly, by grace and gratuitous divine election... it is a mystery! On the other hand, there are many who need more descriptive and deliberated explanations of the Revelation.

In any case, God requests from all of us the fruits of sanctity. The Holy Spirit helps us but not without our personal cooperation. In the first place, diligence is needed. If we react halfway, that is, if we remain at the “border” of the road without entering it, we shall be an easy prey for Satan.

Secondly, we need perseverance in prayer —dialogue—, to be able to get a deeper knowledge and love for Jesus Christ: “Saint without praying...? —I do not believe in this sanctity” (Saint Josemaria Escrivà).

Finally, the spirit of poverty and self-abnegation will prevent our “suffocating” on the way. It better be clear that: “No one can serve two masters...” (Mt 6:24).

In the Virgin Mary we can find the best model of how to react to the God's call.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“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).

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“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)

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“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, N° 2707)