



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 12, 2020

A sower went out to sow.
Some seed fell on the path . . . some fell on rocky ground.
. . . Some seed fell among thorns.
. . . But some fell on rich soil, and produced fruit.

Matthew 13:3, 4, 5, 7, 8

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680)

July 14

Though the New York State Thruway runs close by the North American Martyrs' Shrine, traffic's roar never pierces the peace enveloping Auriesville—

Ossermon to Native

Americans—in the lovely Mohawk Valley, where Kateri Tekakwitha was born barely ten years after the martyrdom of Isaac Jogues and his Jesuit and lay companions. Daughter of a Christian Algonquin mother and non-Christian Mohawk chief, Kateri's parents died in a smallpox

epidemic widely blamed on the missionaries.

Moreover, many Native Americans had experienced exploitation at the hands of "Christian" traders and trappers, further discrediting the faith Kateri embraced in baptism, then pledged to live even more intensely in vowed virginity. Misunderstanding led to harassment, prompting her move to a Christian village farther north along the Saint Lawrence River. Despite this, Kateri's faith remained undaunted, her selfless charity undiminished. Both before and after her death at twenty-four, this young "Lily of the Mohawks" drew countless converts to Christ by the fragrance of her goodness. Through us, does "the aroma of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:15), attract others to the beauty of his gospel?

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Readings for the Week

Monday: Is 1:10-17; Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23; Mt 10:34 — 11:1

Tuesday: Is 7:1-9; Ps 48:2-8; Mt 11:20-24

Wednesday: Is 10:5-7, 13b-16; Ps 94:5-10, 14-15; Mt 11:25-27

Thursday: Is 26:7-9, 12, 16-19; Ps 102:13-14ab, 15-21; Mt 11:28-30

Friday: Is 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8; Is 38:10-12abcd, 16; Mt 12:1-8

Saturday: Mi 2:1-5; Ps 10:1-4, 7-8, 14; Mt 12:14-21

Sunday: Wis 12:13, 16-19; Ps 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16; Rom 8:26-27; Mt 13:24-43 [24-30]

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday: Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

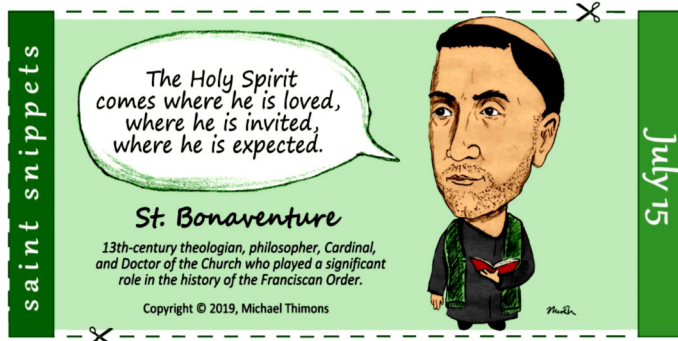
Monday: St. Henry

Tuesday: St. Kateri Tekakwitha

Wednesday: St. Bonaventure

Thursday: Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Saturday: St. Camillus de Lellis;
Blessed Virgin Mary



God's Words

Each day we are bombarded with thousands of words. From the moment our clock radios click on in the morning, until the last moment of the day when the television is turned off or someone bids us "good-night," our life is filled with words. Some words that we hear bring news that leaves us feeling low. Some words lift our spirits. Many of the words we hear are trying to get us to buy something. Some words are hurtful. Today the Church focuses our attention on hearing the word of God. Are God's words just more of the same—part of the endless stream of words that flow into our ears each day? The challenge today is to allow God's word to inspire us in new ways so that our outlook and attitudes align themselves more closely with the heart and mind of Christ Jesus.

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Today's Readings

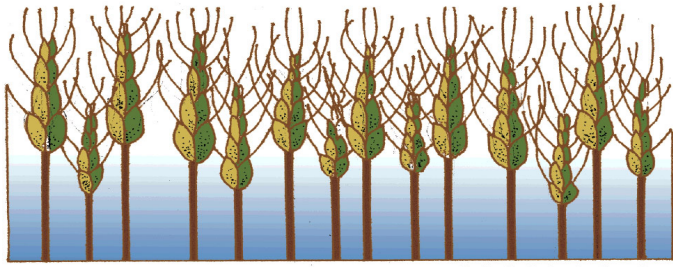
First Reading — My word will achieve the end for which it was sent (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Psalm — The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest (Psalm 65).

Second Reading — We, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves awaiting the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:18-23).

Gospel — Some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit (Matthew 13:1-23 [1-9]).

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**Fifteenth Sunday
In Ordinary Time
July 12, 2020**

**You have crowned the year with your bounty,
and your paths overflow with a rich harvest.**

—Psalm 65:12

Treasures From Our Tradition

Charlemagne, crowned Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day, 800, had a major interest in shaping the worship life of the church, and began a long period of reform and regulation. We owe many confirmation policies and practices to his rule. A baptized person was required to be confirmed as soon as the bishop's presence made it possible. Priests were expected to do their best in seeing to it that a newly-baptized child received the Eucharist. One twelfth-century ritual insists that if the child is not yet capable of eating or drinking, then the priest might give him or her some of the Precious Blood on a leaf or a finger. Despite the best efforts of the Empire to hold liturgical life together, the rules were not always lived out with great beauty. St. Richard of Chichester of thirteenth-century England, for example, was canonized for his holy life as a bishop. One of the remarkable signs of his sanctity was his willingness to climb down from his horse to confirm "merely baptized" layfolk who crossed his path! This praiseworthy practice points a finger of blame at less zealous bishops, whose casual attitudes revealed a sacrament in need of rescue.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Here in the middle of summer, many people grow vegetable and flower gardens, or appreciate the work of others by buying produce from roadside stands and farmer's markets. All our readings today embrace one of God's smallest but most common miracles as a metaphor: the seed and its cycle, and all that it stands for. Isaiah reminds us that just as God waters the earth and cares for it so that seeds may grow, so the Word of God will come and not return to God until it has borne fruit. Psalm 65 describes the cycle of growth and personifies fields that "shout for joy." Romans has "creation groaning in labor pains" as it waits for its seed to come to fruition, redemption of the body. Similarly, Jesus teaches the crowds by using the parable of the sower and the seed.

Growth Requires Patience

Every child in school has experienced the excitement of growing a simple bean seed planted in a paper cup or watched a time lapse video of the growth process. We watch this miracle sprout in a matter of days, and marvel at the whole process. A seed must be planted and die to itself in order to create a new life. Then it must be fertilized and watered and cared for. But most importantly, one must be patient and wait. Seeds take a certain amount of time to develop and may require being dormant for a while. Similarly, a human baby takes nine months to grow from the time the seed is fertilized. But no matter what we do, and how well we do it, not all

seeds will yield fruit. Sometimes the conditions are just not right to allow it. Not all pregnancies go full term. Farmers know the pain of a drought year, or storms that ruin a crop before it can be harvested. Diseases and blight and other things can take hold.

Some Will Be Lost

Growing up in the Western states, beautiful fields of wheat and beans were a common sight for me, but I did not fully understand this parable until going to the Holy Land and seeing the rocky ground that Jesus spoke of. This was an "aha" moment, as I witnessed what a miracle it was when something had the strength and tenacity to grow among the crags despite the arid conditions. What a sign of faith and trust and hope even to plant crops there, knowing that some would be lost! It would seem easier to write them all off, or even less work not to plant them at all.

Jesus could do that to us, but he has not. He has faith and trust that a number of the seeds planted in us will bear great fruit. They will not wither and fade away, but will produce fruit, a hundred-, or sixty- or thirty-fold. And his faith in us gives us hope.

Today's Readings: Is 55:10–11; Ps 65:10, 11, 12–13, 14; Rom 8:18–23; Mt 13:1–23 [1–9]

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Sunday Readings
July 12, 2020
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1
Is 55:10–11

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,
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.

Responsorial Psalm
Ps 65:10, 11, 12–13, 14

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

You have visited the land and watered it;
greatly have you enriched it.
God's watercourses are filled;
you have prepared the grain.

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

Thus have you prepared the land: drenching its furrows,
breaking up its clods,
Softening it with showers,
blessing its yield.

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

You have crowned the year with your bounty,
and your paths overflow with a rich harvest;
The untilled meadows overflow with it,
and rejoicing clothes the hills.

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

The fields are garmented with flocks
and the valleys blanketed with grain.
They shout and sing for joy.

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

Reading 2
Rom 8:18–23

Brothers and sisters: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Gospel
Mt 13:1–23 or Mt 13:1–9

In the shorter form of the reading, the passages in brackets are omitted.

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."

[The disciples approached him and said, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 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. 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. This is why I speak to them in parables, because they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.

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

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.

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

"Hear then the parable of the sower. 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. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. 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. 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. 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."]

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