

Fifteenth Sunday of the Year

The parable of the sower

INTRODUCTION

Jesus often told simple stories called 'parables' to help people to understand something important. Today we hear the parable of the sower.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and ask the children to listen to these words written by the prophet Isaiah:

(cf *Isaiah 60:19*)

I, the Lord will be your everlasting light and my glory will shine on you always.

SORRY

God will forgive us just as we forgive others. The number of times he will forgive us cannot be counted because they will never end. In the following reading Jesus reminds Peter of this (cf *Matthew 18:21-22, 35*):

One day Peter asked Jesus, 'How many times must I forgive someone who wrongs me? Would I have to forgive as many times as seven in a row?' Jesus answered, 'Not just seven times Peter, but more than seventy times seven, for you must forgive from your heart.'

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 3: *Alleluia, alleluia.*

GOSPEL (cf *Matthew 13:3-23*)

Jesus told the crowds this parable: 'One day a farmer went out to sow some seeds in his field. As he scattered the seeds some fell on the stony path at the edge of the field, where flocks of hungry birds flew down and gobbled them up. Some seeds fell on rocky ground, where although they sprouted, the soil was too shallow for their roots, and the baking hot sun shrivelled them up. Other seeds fell where weeds were growing, and the weeds choked them until they died. Some of the seeds landed on the farmer's richest soil, and grew into strong and healthy plants.'

Jesus explained the meaning of this story to the people:

'The seeds are the things which I teach you, the good news about God. Some people hear God's word but they do not understand; this is the seed which falls on the stony path.

'Some people welcome my words and try hard

to follow my ways at first, but then they give up. They are like the seeds which fall on rocky ground; they sprout but then shrivel and die.

'Some people hear my message, but their hearts are filled with other thoughts; the message becomes choked like the seeds choked with weeds, and they cannot produce fruit.

'The seed that falls on rich soil is like those who hear my message and understand it; they grow strong and the harvest is great.'

DISCUSSION

How did the farmer sow his seed?

As he walked up and down the furrow he scattered the seed by hand from a large wicker basket. (Demonstrate this action to the children; it helps to explain why so much seed fell on poor ground.)

Can you remember where the first handful of seed landed and what happened to it?

It fell on the stony path and was gobbled up by the birds.

Where else did the seed fall and what happened to the them in each of these places?

- on the rocky soil the seed sprouted at first but then shrivelled up.
- amongst the weeds the seed became choked as the weeds grew.
- on the rich soil the seeds grew tall and healthy producing flowers and fruit.

What did Jesus mean when he talked about the seed in this story? - The seed was God's word which Jesus brought to share with us. Some people do not listen, others listen but give up trying to follow Jesus because it is not always easy. Some people listen and understand; they realize they need to live as Jesus taught them.

Are we like the stony path, the rocky ground, the patch of weeds or the rich deep soil? - If we listen to God's word and understand it, God's love will grow in our hearts like a strong healthy plant. We will bear much fruit by allowing his love to show in our actions, our thoughts and in our words.

ACTIVITY

Colour the picture of the sower in his field with the different places where the seed can fall.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus help us to listen to and understand your message, so that our hearts and lives will be filled with God's love.