

Homily 15th Sunday Year A – 2020

Hard though it is to believe, when God looks at us, God sees our beauty, our potential, our love and our life in its fullness. We begin mass in song, with joy in our hearts, and move into the penitential rite, not so that God will look favourably on us because God already does. The rite helps us see ourselves as God sees us. It helps us recognise our inner beauty which is a reflection of its creator, of God. The parable of the sower shows us that God is fully aware of all the pitfalls, challenges, difficulties and failures of life. But the parable also invites us to focus on the good ground which takes up over 90% of life and which is the foundation of its beauty. Surely, we need all our energy, all our virtues, qualities and abilities to care for and tend the good ground so that it bears not just any fruit but the best fruit possible. Today, the parable calls us to nurture the ground on which we live, to nurture, care for and tend this earth, which tenderly cares for us, so that it bears fruit - fruit that it wants to share with us. If you do not pick the berries off a blackberry bush, they grow smaller and smaller each year. If you do pick them each year, they grow bigger and juicier each successive year. Those listening to Jesus would have understood the parable as they lived off the land. Jesus, as always, adds something extra by identifying the seed with his Word. A seed only produces one kind of crop but the Word of God produces multiple gifts, virtues, talents and abilities. Farmers, in Jesus' day, could expect a tenfold crop only in the best of years. Jesus makes it very clear that his word produces staggering amounts of goodness, invaluable qualities, and outstanding virtues and it will take more than a lifetime to realise their full potential. So, let's start now!

Macrina Wiederkehr speaks of crumbs (which could be seeds or the Word) when she writes: *Crumbs are entirely sufficient. Crumbs are those small things that the world would toss aside, seeing little value in them. However, to the one who lives under the eye of God, they are far from valueless. Everything in life can be nourishing. Everything can bless us, but we have to be there for the blessing to occur. Being present with quality is a decision we are invited to make each day. It is another way to become like God. The decision for real presence is not easy. If we can make this decision and live it, it will be a kind of salvation for us. It can save us from many kinds of death: the death of apathy and mediocrity, the death of carelessness, the death of boredom, the death of selfishness, the death of meaninglessness. There is nothing so healing in all the world as real presence. Our real presence can then feed the ache for God in others!!*

End note

Late one night, a preacher was driving on a country road and had an accident. A farmer stopped and said, "Sir, are you okay?" The preacher said, "Yes, I had the Lord

riding with me." The farmer said, "Well, you better let the Lord ride with me, because you're going to kill him!"