

## Homily 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year A 2023

Since the Gospel gives Jesus' explanation of the parable of the Sower, who can do anything better?? Many commentators on the Gospel believe that most of the gospel reading was added after Jesus died, added by the early Christian community. So, let's focus on the original story.

Usually, when we look at a work of art, we take in the whole picture before we start looking at the detail and discovering its more intricate riches, the use of colour, elements included in the picture, the feeling it emanates, its aura and the wonder of its creation, plus much, much more.

We have been presented with a Sower who rather expansively throws his seed around like there's no tomorrow, which would have been too extravagant for a peasant farmer who would be much more careful with his sowing. Seeing the seed as the Word of God has been instilled into us because it is a theme that runs through Jesus' teaching and offers ideas of growth and development over time. But it is possible to think of the field as a person in whom Jesus' words are sown. Didn't this happen when we were baptised? We are well aware that there are rocky areas in our lives as well as those elements in it that choke the life out of us. All too often we face the areas in us that do not bear fruit and we see ourselves as gradually withering away. What we do not seem to focus on and find more challenging, although it shouldn't be so, is that vast area of good soil, all of which bears fruit rather abundantly and takes up the vast majority of our life-space. Why cannot we believe this of ourselves!!

Just think about this!

The seed has been freely given, the soil – us, has been created by God and in his image and contains multiple possibilities and it is God who nourishes the seeds' growth within us the more we accept Jesus Christ in our lives. It should also be said that the fruit of the seeds is God's work not ours. So why not look at ourselves in this way rather than keep focusing on our failures, the rocky ground we have trouble dealing with, the errors and sins that help choke our lives. Lovingly and with deep yearning, Jesus is only too eager to set us free with his forgiveness and mercy. If we look at the whole picture in this way, we will realise that we have spent most of our lives wanting to be good people, to reach out and help others, to support and care for them, to willingly suffer for others and to truly show genuine love. We even hate making and having enemies, even if they are difficult to avoid or deal with. But, most of all, in this version of the picture we will see that when God looks at us, he only sees the fertile ground. It is possible that Jesus is unaware of the rocky ground or the thorns or the pathway within us because he accepts us just as we are, just as we are!!

St Augustine of Hippo, whose Rule we Assumptionists follow, reflecting on his life after his conversion, saw that God had always been there watching over him guiding him even during the early part of his life and that it was God who finally led him to conversion. One might call his life a journey from Rejection to Discovery. Throughout the rest of his life, Augustine thanked God every day for the blessings he received and was able to give to others. Another story:

THE TRUTH SHOP

*I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the name of the shop: THE TRUTH SHOP.*

*The salesgirl was very polite: What type of truth did I wish to purchase, partial or whole? The whole truth, of course. No deceptions for me, no defences, no rationalizations. I wanted my truth plain and unadulterated. She waved me on to another side of the store.*

*The salesman there gave him a packet of seeds.*

*What are these? I asked. These are truth seeds, said the salesman, you have to plant them and the truth will grow within you.*

Being permeated with the spirit of God, we are permeated with the spirit of Truth

**I asked old aunt Maud how she lost her husband and she told me her sad story...**

"Well, he needed a blood transfusion, but his blood type was not on record, so the doctors asked me if I knew what it was, as they urgently needed to know, in order to save my Norman's life. Tragically, I've never known his blood type, so I only had time to sit and say goodbye. I'll never forget how supportive my Norman was. Even as he was fading away, I realised even more how my Norman was always thinking of others because he kept on whispering to me, "**Be positive, be positive!**"