

Reflecting On Sunday's Readings

The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — July 12, 2020

First Reading — Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing 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.**

Second Reading — Romans 8:18-23

¹⁸ I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; ²⁰ for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; ²¹ because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; ²³ and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Gospel Reading — Matthew 13:1-23

¹ That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat there; and the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶ but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears, let him hear.” ¹⁰ Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹ And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from

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him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says: 'You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. ¹⁵ For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them.' ¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. ¹⁸ "Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When any one hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart; this is what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading — Isaiah 55:10-11

1. How have you seen God prepare the soil of your heart to make it fertile to receive his Word?

Second Reading — Romans 8:18-23

2. How can the Holy Spirit use suffering to give us insight and hope?

Gospel Reading — Matthew 13:1-23

3. Which type of soil do you most identify with at this point in your life?
4. What can we do to ensure that we are increasingly becoming good soil?
5. What is the difference between “hearing the message” and “taking it in”?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.