

HOMILY FOR THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Sunday, 12 July 2020

- Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day

Part Two: reflection on the readings

Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 103

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 firstfruits of the Spirit,
we also groan within ourselves
as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower.
All who come to him will have life forever.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel [MT 13:1-23](#) OR [13:1-9](#)

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.”

PART TWO: REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Two weeks ago, I preached about a friend of mine who is suffering. I told you that her father, in Mexico, was old and sick. My friend feared that her father would die soon. The greatest part of her suffering is that, should her father die, she would not be able to return to Mexico. She is here with us without papers.

I also said that I would say a mass for her and her family “on this side” (in the United States) when her father did pass.

Today, I must announce that her father has died, and I am making good on my promise to say a mass. What follows is the homily I will give on Sunday at the Spanish language mass.

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Tomás Garcia died on 6 July and was buried on 8 July. The mass in Jalisco was very beautiful: there were many people from the village. There was much music (a Mariachi). The whole extended family was there, with the exception of my friend, the daughter of the deceased.

I said two weeks ago that I am a *Norteño* (an American). Sonoma is my home. My father lived here since his birth and he died here as well. I said his funeral mass here in this very church. For these reasons, it is difficult for me to understand the sadness in the heart of our friend here at St. Leo’s who has lost her father. Let me say, for now, that I have in my heart only respect and tenderness (*cariño*) for my friend this day as I say these words. I have respect and tenderness for her, for her family here in Sonoma and for her family on the other side (Mexico).

Two weeks ago, I spoke of how hard it is to honor your mother and father when you are separated from them. The teaching of Jesus is strict:

The one who loves his father and his mother more than me is not worthy of me.

But, Jesus also says,

The one who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

At times, it is necessary to leave your home behind you. It is necessary to leave the house of your mother and father and travel to a new land. This, of course, is what happened to Abraham, the father of faith.

God spoke to Abraham, saying,

Leave your father's house for a land that I will show you.

But God also told Abraham and all who have set out with him on the road,

Do not be afraid, for I will be with you.

The irony of the teaching of Jesus is just this: at times the way we find ourselves to be worthy of the God of Abraham, the God who calls us to leave our father's house, is to take up our cross and follow the Lord, just as he instructs us.

Follow the Lord. Set out on the road that leads to this side. Set out on the road that leads to a new generation and new opportunities. Set out on the road and know that, in following the Lord, you will give honor to your mother and to your father.

Let me offer a beautiful blessing from the Old Testament as a way to give thanks for the life of Tomás Garcia, who passed away from us on the 6th day of July, honored and respected and beloved of his family in Mexico and on this side as well.

Those who honor their father atone for sins,
and those who respect their mother are like those who lay up treasure.
Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children,
and when they pray they will be heard.

And above all, do not be afraid. Take up your cross and follow the Lord on the road.

Tomás Garcia, age 84 years. *requiescem in pace*. Amen

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the reflection on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?