



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

# Family Faith Focus

Volume 8, Issue 50

July 12, 2020

## Dates to Remember

- July 11: 4:00 PM Mass
- July 12: 9:00 AM Mass
- Reservations are required. Space is limited.
- Please see our parish website for more information and links to view Sunday or weekday Masses online.

## Our Catholic Faith: The Gospel of Matthew

*"Jesus sent out these Twelve after instructing them thus, 'Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

—Matthew 10: 5-7

With these words, Jesus sent out the twelve apostles he had chosen on a mission to the Jewish people in Israel.

Matthew's Gospel, which we hear throughout this liturgical year, was written for a Jewish audience who had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah of God and the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Matthew quotes extensively from the OT as we see in this Sunday's Gospel story about the parable of the sower.

Matthew's Gospel contains a total of 28 parables, portraying Jesus as a great teacher who challenges his followers to put their faith into action.

## Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Matthew 13: 1-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

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."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Sunday Gospel Connection: July 12, 2020

### Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — Cycle A

### Matthew 13: 1-23

**Gospel Background:** Today's Gospel marks the beginning of the third long discourse given by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. Over the next few weeks, the Gospel readings will consist of the entire 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Matthew's Gospel, a lengthy teaching discourse.

Throughout this discourse, Jesus will offer several parables to illustrate for his listeners what he means by the kingdom of heaven. He begins with the parable of the sower, which appears rather straightforward—of course seeds grow best in good soil.

Seeds that miss the soil, are sown on rocky ground, or are sown among other plants will not grow. The surprise in the parable is the enormous yield of the seed that is sown on good soil.

Jesus then explains his use of parables. Jesus seems to suggest that he uses parables to teach because the meanings of parables are not self-evident. The hearer must engage in some degree of reflection in order to comprehend the message of a parable. In this way, the medium—the parable—models the point of the parable of the sower. Those who are willing to engage themselves in the effort to understand will be rewarded by the discovery of the message and will bear fruit.

To bring home the point, Jesus interprets the parable of the sower to his disciples. The different types of soil in which the seeds are sown are metaphors for the disposition with which each individual hears the teaching about the kingdom of heaven. Some will be easily swayed away from the kingdom of heaven. Some will receive it for a time but will lose it when faced with difficulties. Some will hear the word but will then permit other cares to choke it out. Yet some will receive it well, and the seed will produce abundant fruit.

**Family Connection:** Today's Gospel reminds us that in order for God's Word to take root in us and produce abundant fruit, we must endeavor to be like good soil. Families, in particular, hold the responsibility for "preparing the soil" so that the seeds of God's Word can grow strong. There are many ways in which families do this—family traditions in which faith is celebrated, prayer and reading of Scripture, and instruction on the faith. In these ways, parents fulfill the promises they made at their child's Baptism.

Gather together as a family and reflect together on the Sacrament of Baptism. Tell the story of the Baptism of each child, showing any pictures that were taken. If you have your child's Baptism candle or gown, share these as well. Recall together that one of the promises that parents make at their child's Baptism is to bring them up in the practice of our faith. Talk together about the importance of this promise to your family. Then read together today's Gospel, Matthew 13:1-23. Reflect together on the ways in which your family practices your faith (daily prayer, Mass attendance, religious instruction, etc.). Remind one another that we do these things as a family so that God's Word can take root in our lives and produce abundant fruit. Conclude in prayer together by praying today's Psalm, Psalm 65.

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/15th-sunday-in-ordinary-time-a-sunday-connection/>



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