

The Parable of the Sower: The Seed and the Path. - MabuhayRadio

Written by Francis Fernandez

Saturday, 12 July 2008 12:16 - Last Updated Saturday, 12 July 2008 12:43

Saint Matthew tells us in the Gospel of today's Mass (Matt 13: 1-23) that Jesus sat beside the sea and that such great crowds gathered about him to hear his words that He had to get into a boat so that they could listen to him from the shore. Sitting now in a small fishing-vessel, Our Lord began to teach them: A sower went out to sow. And the seed He spoke about fell on very different types of soil.

In Galilee, where the terrain tended to be very uneven and hilly, it was only the narrow strips of land in the valleys and skirting the river banks that were sown with seed. The parable faithfully records for us the agricultural situation of that particular area. The sower scattered his seed broadcast, which is why some of it would fall onto the path. The seed that fell on those paths would soon be eaten up by birds or trodden underfoot by passers-by. The detail of the rocky soil, covered perhaps by only a thin layer of earth, was also true to reality. Because of the lack of soil-depth, the seed shoots up more rapidly, but only to have the heat dry it up just as quickly, since it has no depth of root.

Lack of interior recollection prevents union with God

The soil on which the good seed falls is the whole world; it represents each individual person. We too are soil for the divine seed. Even though the sowing is carried out with great love – it is God who pours himself into our souls – the results depend largely on the condition of the soil on which it falls. Christ's words tell us forcefully about the responsibility man has to prepare himself to receive God's grace and to correspond with it.

Some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. When anyone hears

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the word of the kingdom and does not understand it the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart. The path is soil that has been trodden on until it has become hard. These compacted areas are dissipated, empty souls, prepared to accept only external things. Such souls are incapable of recollecting their thoughts and guarding their senses. They have no order in their affections and are not particularly watchful over their feelings, so that they frequently allow their imagination to engage in useless thoughts. These souls are like ground that has never been tilled or cultivated, having always turned their face away from God. Their hearts are hardened, like those constantly trodden pathways. They hear God's word, but the devil easily snatches it away from them. He is not idle; rather, he has his eyes always wide open and is always ready to spring and snatch away the gift that you do not use (Cardinal J. H. Newman, Sermon for Sexagesima Sunday: Calls to Grace).

We must ask Our Lord for fortitude so that we never become like those who are like the path on which the seed fell - negligent, lukewarm and full of scorn (St John Chrysostom, Homilies on St Matthew's Gospel, 44, 3). Negligence and lukewarmness are manifestations of a lack of contrition and repentance, and of our failure to put up a determined struggle against venial sins. The first time the divine Sower scattered his seed onto the soil of our soul was in Baptism. How often since then has He given us an abundance of his grace! How often has He passed close beside us, helping, encouraging and forgiving us! At this moment, in the intimacy of our prayer, we can say to him quietly: O Jesus! If in spite of the poor way I have behaved, you have done for me what you have done, what more would you do if I were to respond well?

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