

Homily. 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 11/12 July 2020.

The word 'Seminary' means a seed-bed. At its best its both a place and an environment where those vocational seeds are discerned, nurtured, nourished and guided into their full fruitfulness. Some of those living seeds will go on to Priestly ministry, others will find new paths forward taking them into different ministries and ways of living the Good-News. The most important thing is that none of these seeds get abandoned to die uncared for, choked by competing, destructive forces or left shallow and unsustainable in the soil for lack of God's truth and love.

Jesus speaks about this in the Gospel parable, not just about Seminaries but about the Christian faith life of all of us. The seed is the word of God's life, a life that has taken on flesh, with us and for us in the person of Christ. God liberally and generously sows the Jesus-seed into us, a gift and a grace that has the potential to make us fruitful for the life of the world in the best of possible ways. Our Church community, our worship, fellowship and everyday kind and caring missionary works try to help us grow the seed of the Christ-life within us. However, we are the soil and its the state of the soil, the tenderness or the hardness of each of us, that sets the scene for the seeds progress or for its frustration.

Isaiah told us that God drops the word of life down upon us like the snow and the rain. Jesus parable says that God tosses handfuls of Himself all over and around us. We can be sure, then, that the sowing and the seed aren't the problem, certain in the knowledge that the sower and the seed are designed to bear the right fruit. What we have to look at is the

receptive state of our own hearts and minds, to see if our faith is shallow, our kindness choked off or if our potential is already gobbled up.

As we listened to the 2nd reading we learnt that St. Paul struggled in the same way we do. He saw that good intentions could be derailed and that hopes, dreams and hard work sometimes came too little. He wants us to understand ourselves as people who are involved with all of creation in one great universal birthing process. This process is one in which we are actors and participants, never spectators or distant observers. St. Paul wants us to know that our efforts, our groaning as he called it, join us with the renewal of the world, the goal that God is bringing alive.

The way that we can participate in this renewal and re-birth is by being the best soil for the Jesus-seed that we can possibly be. It starts with humility, with our humanity, facing our limits and failures, doing this while asking Jesus to yoke in beside us, helping us carry our burdens and lighten our load. Then, in partnership with the Lord, yoked together like a team of oxen, we can plough up the dry, hard soil of our hearts and minds, making them into a welcoming, moist seed bed for God's new life. This is our way forwards, our part in the process which brings the sort of fruitfulness that provides hope, meaning and nourishment for us and for our tired, lost and hungry world.