



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 16th July 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

Those who suffer persecution, oppression, denial of human rights

Keynote: Hear the word of God and let it grow

Prophet Isaiah 55:10-11

'This short reading is both poetic and beautiful. *'As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens,'* says the Lord, *'and do not return without watering the earth... so the word that goes forth from my mouth does not return empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'* There is a gentle feel about this rain that waters the earth, giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating. The passage prepares us for the gospel today and the parable of the sower going out to sow the seed for the next harvest.

Responsorial Psalm 64 [65] – A springtime song in praise of God goodness

Letter of Paul to the Romans 8:18-23

Earlier in this letter Paul spoke of the suffering that is the authentic sign of the Christian experience, now he turns our attention to the glory that awaits the faithful, *'I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us.'* Then the apostle speaks of the longing and yearning for freedom that is part of our human condition. *'The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his own... creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as children of God.'* Like the pain that accompanies childbirth, *'the entire creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth, and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit.'* Yes, we long for freedom for ourselves and for all mankind. In the Spirit we have the chance to be recreated, reborn, and live anew.

Gospel according to Matthew 13:1-23

Matthew, the evangelist, reaches the central theme of his account of the life and teachings of Jesus. Presenting us in the coming weeks with seven parables about the kingdom of God. The first, the Parable of the Sower was likely to appeal to the audience of agrarian workers familiar with the hardened path surfaces that could not be broken by the plough, or the stony ground of Palestine, and the birds eager for the seed grain scattered on the land in the hot sun. Any farm worker also understands that seed grain is variable, some plants giving a crop at harvest, some a hundredfold, some sixty and some just choked by the thorns and weeds. *'Imagine a sower going out to sow,'* says Jesus, *'As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path... others fell on patches of rock... others fell among thorns... others fell on good soil...'* Jesus tells them, *'You are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom... the one who received it on patches of rock this is the one who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But has no root in them... and the one who received the seed in rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it; this is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'*

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