

**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, MUMBLES**  
**Reflection for**  
**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, July 12, 2020**  
**(May be used for Home Prayer Service)**  
**Dominican Friars, Swansea**

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*This reflection may be used during the home prayer service. Please see the home prayer service sheet for details.*

**GOD GIVES LIFE TO HIS WORD IN OUR HEARTS**

It is beautifully said that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Jesus uses parables to teach us heavenly lessons because he is in touch with our human realities. From these earthly stories, he then leads us by the hand to understand heavenly mysteries. That is what we see in the parable of the sower in which Jesus compares the word of God to the seeds sown by the sower.

**God is the Sower:** In comparing God to a sower, Jesus teaches us that God is ever productive. Like the sower who desired to spread out his seed for sowing, it is the will of God for all to know his will (cf. Eph 1:9; 1 Tim 2:4). It is God who sows his word in our heart. It was he who spoke the word and all that is came into being (cf. Gen 1:1; Is 45:18). It is this same God who sends his Spirit to renew the earth (Ps 104:30).

**The Word of God is the Seed:** Seeds are usually small in size and it is very easy to ignore them. However, when they are sown, they germinate and become highly noticeable. The word of God is the message of salvation which many people have ignored and abandoned. This same word of God has brought life to others and they have found their security and refuge in it. The word of God guides and direct the path of those who believe in it (Ps 119:105). Unlike seeds that may or may not germinate, the word of God must be fulfilled (Mt 5:18). As related in the First Reading (Is 55:10-11), when the word of God is spoken, it will always accomplish the purpose for which it was intended. The universal purpose of the word of God is eternal life. Thus, Peter declared to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go, you have the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68).

**The Human Heart is the Soil of the Word of God:** Just as the soil receives the seed, the human heart is the recipient of the word of the God. Drawing from human experiences, Jesus highlights the different dispositions people have towards the word of God when it is sown in their hearts. Some fall on the path and birds pick them up. Some fall on rocky ground where they do not last. Some fall on thorns which choke them.

Others fall on fertile soil where they produce abundantly. The first three dispositions signify the difficulties people encounter in living out the Christian life. Many people are weighed down by the cares and worries of life. Others are faced with spiritual battles which overwhelm them. Like thorns, life's challenges and circumstances choke life out of many. In the face of the thorns, rocks and the scorching sun of life, God comes with his water of life to comfort us.

**The Water of the Spirit Comforts Us:** Seeds need water, light, and air to have life. Given these enabling conditions, they thrive, bloom and produce abundant fruits. Water, light, and air have been identified as symbols of the Holy Spirit. It is only with the power of the Holy Spirit that we can produce fruits for the kingdom of God. In the Spirit, we are washed in the waters of baptism, we receive the light of Christ and we breathe the life of God (Jn 6:63).

**It is God who Gives Life to His Word:** In nature, crops do not grow immediately they are planted but they go through certain biological processes before they spring to life. Thus, the ministers of God should not get discouraged if their ministry does not yield immediate result. In this sense, St Paul encourages us to be patient as we await the redemption of our bodies in the Spirit (2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, Rom 8:18-23). Just as it is not farmers who give life to seeds, it is not ministers who give life to God's word. Paul sows, Apollos waters but it is God who makes the plant grow and it is God who matters (1 Cor 3:6-7).

The parable of the sower is then a message of hope to Christians at this time of the pandemic that nothing can stifle the word of God in our lives. We may be far from our churches but God is never far from us. As the Psalmist says, when the Lord brings us back to our churches, our mouth shall be filled with laughter and our tongues with songs of joy. The Lord shall do great things for us and we shall rejoice and be glad (Ps 146). May the word of God comfort us and renew our hope in Him who has promised never to abandon us. Amen.