

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time



We are reminded of the spiritual principles that take root in our recovery and sacramental life through Jesus's dialogue with his disciples in this Sunday's Gospel Reading. Followed by a large crowd gathered along the shore, Jesus shares the conditions necessary for a fruitful spiritual life as he shares:

*"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."*

Jesus's parables allow us to apply his message to our lives today. It's not often that he explains the meaning behind it, as he does in this case:

*"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."*

We may have had a hard time envisioning a life rooted in Christ and free from the family disease of addiction. After a spiritual experience that brings humility, honesty, and willingness, a new seed is planted. It is a seed planted by God, watered by faith, and nourished by the Holy Spirit and fellowship that surround us.

The twelve steps of recovery provide a framework for finding and maintaining rich soil. When neglected, obstacles come our way that can un-root us. Establishing a solid foundation in the early stages of our personal growth can go a long way to provide momentum toward freedom. It doesn't stop there, as we are given an opportunity to remain close to God through daily honest inventory, prayer and meditation, and service to others.

Recovery must never be one of many things resting on our plate. Instead, it must be the plate upon which everything in our lives rest. Emmet Fox, a spiritual leader of the early twentieth century, puts it best: "Sooner or later you will have to put God first in your life. God must become the only thing that really matters. It need not be, and better not be, the only thing in your life, but it must be the first thing. When that happens your life becomes simple, richer, and infinitely more worthwhile."

We are going to face both trials and triumphs, even in peak spiritual fitness. Both can shake us, but if we are standing upon solid ground we can go anywhere and do anything while not taking the burdens all upon ourselves. As we heard last week, Jesus offers his companionship and support. The way of life he's laid out for us allows us to share our burdens with him and, thus, discover freedom and happiness.

- In what kind of soil are the seeds of your recovery and faith life currently planted?
- Which of the twelve steps is helping you find or maintain rich soil in your recovery?
- How do you describe whether your recovery is one of many things on your plate or if it is the plate upon which everything rests?

Invest in Healing

Support individuals, families, and communities devastated by addiction

- Faith, fellowship, and freedom made possible through expanded resources for individuals and communities
- Monthly donors enjoy access to our Advocate's Circle:
 - free copy of *The Twelve Steps and the Sacraments*
 - weekly exclusive reflections on faith and recovery delivered to your inbox
- Get started today at catholicinrecovery.com/donate

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14

2nd Reading: Romans 8:18-23

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-23