THE SEED THAT FALLS ON
good ground
WILL YIELD A
fruitful
harvest.

PSALM 65
Teaching with Parables

Reflection on Matthew 13:1-23

Today’s Gospel marks the beginning of the third long discourse given by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. Over the next few weeks, the Gospel readings will consist of the entire 13th Chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, a lengthy teaching discourse.

Throughout this discourse, Jesus will offer several parables to illustrate for his listeners what he means by the kingdom of heaven. He begins with the parable of the sower, which appears rather straightforward—of course seeds grow best in good soil. Seeds that miss the soil, are sown on rocky ground, or are sown among other plants will not grow. The surprise in the parable is the enormous yield of the seed that is sown on good soil.

Jesus then explains his use of parables. Jesus seems to suggest that he uses parables to teach because the meanings of parables are not self-evident. The hearer must engage in some degree of reflection in order to comprehend the message of a parable. In this way, the medium—the parable—models the point of the parable of the sower. Those who are willing to engage themselves in the effort to understand will be rewarded by the discovery of the message and will bear fruit.

To bring home the point, Jesus interprets the parable of the sower to his disciples. The different types of soil in which the seeds are sown are metaphors for the disposition with which each individual hears the teaching about the kingdom of heaven. Some will be easily swayed away from the kingdom of heaven. Some will receive it for a time but will lose it when faced with difficulties. Some will hear the word but will then permit other cares to choke it out. Yet some will receive it well, and the seed will produce abundant fruit.

St. Bonaventure

Patron Saint of Stomach Disorders • July 15

Bonaventure was born in Tuscany, Italy, in 1221. As a child he was very ill and, through the prayers of Francis of Assisi, he was cured of his childhood affliction. At the age of 22, Bonaventure became a member of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor. He traveled to France and spent much of his time studying philosophy and theology in Paris. He became a trusted friend of Thomas Aquinas and King Louis, both future saints themselves. In 1256, Bonaventure was named general of the Franciscan order and that same year was a speaker at the Council of Lyons. Unfortunately, Bonaventure passed away before the close of the Council in 1274.

Prayer to St. Bonaventure

Blessed Saint Bonaventure, I ask for your sympathetic prayers because you know this kind of disorder well. Pray with me for comfort and healing in the hands of the Lord. Ask Him to make me well and able to wake up each day with the strength and courage needed to continue with His plan. Our prayers together can work a miracle with the Lord. Amen.

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