

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time A Revised  
Ex 19:2-6; Rom 5:6-11; Mt 9: 36-10:5  
June 17, 2023

A huge crowd followed Jesus. Some may have looked at that huge, yearning crowd and saw the injustice that made them that way; others may have looked at that crowd and seen people troubled by sins of all types (kinds); still others may have looked at all those people and saw a population spiritually abandoned by their leaders; while others may have looked out and seen those people as the victims of Roman oppression. Jesus looked and saw a potential harvest. The laborers may be few, but the harvest can still be abundant.

We can see a similar scene today. People can look at so many in our world who are morally at sea, adrift without any spirituality to guide their life. Some people look at our world and only complain, criticize, and condemn. Others look at our world and, like Jesus, see the potential for a great harvest. How do you and I prepare for the harvest? There are three phases.

The first is the planting of the seeds. If we want a renewed morality in our world, we need to start planting seeds. If we want to see the rebirth of community in our world, we need to start planting seeds of openness and acceptance of others. If we want to restore respect for human life, we need to start planting seeds seeing God in all life. If you and I want to see people changed by the Gospel message, we need to start planting seeds of respect and acceptance of those of other religions, ethnicities, races, and social status different from ourselves. Planting seeds may not be glamorous, but there is no harvest without beginning with the seed.

We must not only pray for a harvest, but plant the seeds of that harvest. Are you and I planting seeds for the future?

We plant seeds for a different future, seeds of a better harvest by contributing to scholarships for students, supporting groups that promote truths in which we believe, donating to support groups that help families and individuals, using moments of personal conversion to speak about God or to defend the sanctity of life, to speak well of people who are criticized, to introduce civility into our public discourse.. Each of us can be the laborers for Jesus by planting the seeds of a harvest.

The next step / phase moving toward the harvest is the nurturing, the growing of the seeds that have been sown. The seeds are there, but we need to nurture, care for, and encourage growth. Untended, seeds can and will, die. Maybe we need to spend more time and energy encouraging the spiritual growth we see around us in young people or in fellow Christians of any age. We can be so quick to criticize shortcomings in others, but not in ourselves. We can forget the importance of encouraging virtue, morality, good will, generosity and faith when we find it.

Some people say we live in a culture of constant complaint. We can hasten the harvest of which Jesus speaks if we publicize the good we see and reinforce people in their commitment to Jesus, by doing what we can to help the seeds in others grow strong and full. Millions of seeds can be planted, but if they are not watered, fertilized, and cared for, there is no harvest,

Then comes reaping the harvest, to gather it together and to build up the community of the Church here and the gathering of the saved in eternity. The challenge that we all need to remember is that the planting, the nurturing, the gathering are always going on. It starts again with the birth of each baby, with each generation.

Are you and I planting, nurturing or gathering?

The Apostles were called and sent to heal, cure, and guide, as every Christian is called to be a laborer for the kingdom. This summer, as we go our different ways, let us take the time to reflect on whether we are planting any seeds for the kingdom in ours or anyone's life. Are we nurturing the commitment to Jesus that we see beginning to take shape in people's lives! Are we gathering as Christians together, building up our Family of Parishes and the Church as the visible sign of Jesus' presence in our world? That is important because it is not enough to know Jesus' truth. It is not enough to preach Jesus' truth. We need to live Jesus' truth in our life every day, to let the world see what human life can be like when it is formed around the Gospel.

The harvest doesn't drop out of heaven. It grows here on earth. We are not called to be spectators of the growth of the Gospel, but active participants in spreading the Good News. Every time we say the Lord's Prayer, we ask, "*Thy kingdom come.*" Every time we say that phrase, may we make a commitment to be part of the planting, the nurturing and gathering of that kingdom.

Be part of the planting or nurturing or the gathering, but always be a laborer for the kingdom.

- Fr. Stephen Lattner, O.S.B.