

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 16, 2017

Sewing Seeds Not Weeds

This week's readings definitely have a common theme, the "seed", or the "word of God". Many times, it is easy for us to hear God's words without truly listening to them. We may sit at Mass and hear the readings but our mind is on what we have to do when we get home or how to get our kids to stop fidgeting or even an argument that happened before Church. Thus, it is important for us to try and clear our heads and prepare our hearts before Mass begins. We need to be ready for the seeds to be planted so that they do not fall on rocky ground.

Ever since I was a child, the symbolism of a "seed" in the Bible has always resonated with me. Some of the parables were confusing to me, but the one from today's Gospel, was always clear. We must take care of seeds if we want them to grow just like we must take care of God's words, if we want them to spread and flourish. We need to plant our "seeds" in solid ground. This might be misinterpreted as to say "only share the word with those who are ready". However, I do not think many hearts are ready for those seeds to be planted without preparation, diligence and hard work. Just like the ground, where some years the soil is better than others, our hearts are more open at some points in our lives than others. This can vary, not only in phases of life, but even from day to day.

As a parent of younger children, when reflecting on these words this week, it spoke to me in a whole new way. I came to the realization that I need to remember that my words and actions are seeds that I am planting in my children, not only God's words. If I want them to act and react the way that Jesus would desire, then I need to act and react that way also. Therefore, I need to keep the word "seeds" in the back of my mind. The second reading talks about the "children of God". I know this is referring to all of us, but I think of *my* children. More than anything, I want them to be true "children of God". I want them to love Him before all things. This does not come naturally; it is only through patience, love, prayer, weekly Mass participation, Faith Formation and family discussion that this can happen. Only through softening their hearts (preparing the soil), can these seeds truly take root.

Picture a young child in the yard who finds a white fluffy dandelion and their eyes light up. They want to blow it so badly. Some of us may let them (those of us who do not care if a few more weeds get scattered in the yard) but those who keep their yards in excellent condition tell them "don't blow it, you will spread the weeds". These readings made me think about how we, as a community and followers of Christ, need to spread seeds not weeds. Weeds choke out the good seeds and take away the beauty of a garden or yard. In the same way, our ugly words and actions (our weeds) choke out the loving, godly words (our seeds).

All of my kids' kindergarten class plays were called "How Does Your Garden Grow?" The title popped into my head because there is a garden in each of our lives and in each of our hearts. So, when you go throughout your day, maybe stop yourself and ask, "How does your garden grow?" Or, better yet, "How can I help my garden to grow better?"

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