



Dear friends,

In this week's gospel, St Matthew (13: vs 1-9), Jesus in telling the parable of the Sower invites us to be good listeners and good doers. But first, we must be good listeners, so that we better understand what we must be doing to bring about the Kingdom of God. The following story helps us to know what we are listening for: *'A man from the country is visiting his friend who lives in the city. As they are walking down a busy, noisy street, the man from the country says to his friend: "I can hear a cricket!" "Impossible!" says the friend. "Look, I'll show you," says the man from the country. He throws some coins onto the footpath, and immediately, people stop and look in the direction of the coins. Too often, it is the more worldly sounds which get our attention over the Word of God!*

Quoting once again from our friend St Benedict, who wrote his rule, or way of life for his enclosed monks in the 6th Century, he wrote these words as the opening to his rule: 'Listen, to the Word of God, with the ear of your heart!' Of course you didn't know that your heart had an ear! But, what a wonderful way to begin a way of life for men and women who had who had withdrawn from the world in silence to pray so that they might be more attentive to hearing what God is saying to us. Understandably, we can't all withdraw from the world as monks and nuns to hear the Word of God. But as the story above indicates: 'For what are we listening?' And, if God speaks in silence, we need to move away from the distractions, and encounter him where he can best be heard.

In the gospel today, Jesus says at the end of the parable: "Listen, anyone who has ears!" Using the parable (a parable is a story which contains a moral or good truth for us to live by) Jesus calls us to listen for the deeper meaning of the parable. In other words, how are we going to challenge ourselves to action after interpreting what the parable means?

The parable of the Sower, has the sower, indiscriminately throwing the seed, so that some of it falls on the path, some on rocky ground, and some among thorns, telling us that there was little chance for the seed to grow and produce any crop. But, some seed fell on good soil, and, produced a crop of thirty, sixty and a hundredfold! All well and good for the soil, where the seed found good soil. But, shouldn't the sower have been more careful as to where he threw the seed?

The point here is that God is generous with his Word: the seed. So is Jesus, who scatters his message in a casual, but far-reaching way. In the case of many hearers, the Word of God suffers the fate of the seed that is lost. But, when the good soil produces the crop, this more than compensates for the seed that fell into infertile soil.

The parable speaks about the generosity of God. While there is much opposition to the Word of God, hearers of the Word, are encouraged to be the fertile, receptive soil, in the face of indifference of many hearers, so that God's Word finds a home in the heart of those who 'have ears to hear.'

May the Word of God find an ear open to receiving His Word, and a heart open to doing His will.

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