

Father Rudy's Reflections

The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 16, 2023

The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

How do you keep our Lord close at hand?

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

We live in a complex world, yet if you think about it, all human history has been filled with distractions, upheavals, and confusion; it is the nature of what surrounds us in each moment of time—it often seems so hard (doesn't it?), as it *was* and *is* for mankind throughout history.

During Jesus's lifetime and ministry, Scripture tells us that bystanders were intrigued by his miracles and teachings, but on many occasions, bystanders rejected him outright. His message of faith, hope, and love did not resonate with them because it was not what they were expecting to hear. They turned their heads and hearts away from him because their brains were hot-wired to accept only what they had been told years before his birth. *Their* kingdom of God was not the kingdom Jesus was describing to them, and thus, they could not assimilate or even understand his message. Can you not think of times in your own life when you ignored an idea because of your preconceived notions and prejudices?

On this Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Jesus describes for his observers a story about the Kingdom of God using a simple narrative, featuring a sower of grain and the seeds he plants upon the earth. This story is called a parable, a means of communication Jesus used throughout his life for the purpose of comparison, using concepts recognized by his audience to explain a deeper truth or a tenet of his ministry. A parable is a revelation through illustration so that an audience might unknowingly begin to accept a message from a simple expression of everyday life. In this example the sower (God) plants his seeds (the message) upon the earth (us), and these seeds will grow, ultimately, only on fertile and committed ground. In this parable seeds are thwarted by birds (those who hear but are unfocused and lose the message), rocky ground (those who are initially enthusiastic but give up when times are difficult), or an overgrowth of thorns (those who are overwhelmed and thus consumed by earthly pursuits).

Today and in our past, communicators in all forms of media have been employing the genre of parables to communicate a truth or a noble idea to an audience. From Aesop's fables to Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tales to Walt Disney's cartoons to George Orwell's or C. S. Lewis' seminal novels to Arthur Miller's plays to 60s folk singers' ballads to Stephen Spielberg's *ET* and other films, creatives often use simple stories to bring truth to life. My question today is this: what simple yet creative methods do you use to keep our Lord close at hand and the main character in your unique storyline?

Yours in Christ,
Father Rudy