

Deacon Dan's homily for Sunday, July 12, 2020

"The Sower"

In 1888 Vincent Van Gogh produced 30 drawings and paintings of a solitary man spreading seed from a bag slung over his chest, crossing an open field with a huge yellow sun dominating the horizon. The painting is titled, "The Sower."



Van Gogh must have been trying to work through something of great meaning to produce 30 similar works. Was he trying to “just get it artistically right?” Was he trying to capture on an artist’s mat something that can only be imprinted onto the soul?

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus identifies four types of soil: hardened soil on the path, shallow soil amongst rocks, soil amongst thorns, and rich soil.

It is definitely the case that over the course of my life, on that path to holiness that our Church was formed to help us with, I have been the hardened path, I have been amongst the rocks with little depth of soil, I have been amongst the thorns, and have, no doubt, been the thorns to others! And, the. Truth is...I may still be in one of those categories!

But, the part of the story that Jesus told that gives us such great Christian hope is that God the Father, the Sower, continues to throw seed out, the seed, which is Jesus himself; His Word, His teachings, His saving action for us, His endless love for me and for you that relentlessly pursues us to bring us into His person, His friendship, His love.

And the second area of hope is knowing that we are not a hardened path or rocks or ye of little soil. We are persons, souls made in the image and likeness of God with a free will, the ability to make decisions to change our lives, to deepen our soil, and enrich ourselves with knowledge of our faith.

This parable of Jesus comes with a full explanation, an explanation directly from Him. There are three pitfalls Jesus cautions us against. First, the hardened soil of the path. Hearing the Word of the kingdom and not understanding it, not studying Scripture and coming to really know Jesus. The fundamentals of the Faith have to be in place before the Word can be accepted. We must practice the Faith.

Second, the thin soil amongst rocks. The trouble here is the one who is drawn into the religious and spiritual because of a charismatic personality or an experience or trauma in their life, but lack the discipline to stay at it, to

practice the faith over a lifetime of experiences, growth, learning and getting to know the person, both human and divine, of Jesus.

And, lastly, Jesus cautions us about losing our Faith to the cares of the world and its luring pursuit of wealth, or honor, or pleasure, or power...in all of its forms. This is a loss of priority.

It is moving God from the center of our lives onto the edge, onto the periphery of our day.

The thorns of the world choke out God in favor of sports, the promotion, the new car, you name it.

But, the target, the place we ask for the grace to be, is the sandy loam, the good soil; ready to bring the seed of Jesus Christ into our very being. To grow with Him, to develop and become like Him along our path to holiness. So that we may produce bountiful fruit to be given away for others.

During these past months of mostly being at home, I built Terri a greenhouse. I love to see her getting so much joy out of her gardening and seeing the plants grow. The soil she uses, while rich, dark, and ready to accept the seeds, needs to be tilled, fertilized or nurtured, watered, and cared for.

It's the same for us, even for the best of soil, to produce bountiful fruit, our spiritual self, needs to be regularly nurtured and fed in the Eucharist, watered with the knowledge of Scripture and the Church, and cultivate new seeds of Christ's life in others.

About 27 years ago, some seeds of faith and hope were planted right here on this hill. Those seeds fell on rich soil and have produced a yield of a hundredfold or more in our parish. Now, we are being asked in a very challenging time to plant new seeds of faith and hope by the One Parish Family Campaign so that we can maintain our facilities to be able to continue to satisfy the spiritual hunger and need of even more people in western El Dorado County.

“As Father Larry said last week, we understand that the timing of this Campaign is not good, but we need as much support as is possible to help us meet the needs of the parish. Our goal is to wrap up the Campaign by the

end of the summer. This week each of us will be receiving a letter with a pledge card for your prayerful consideration if you have not already made your gift to the Campaign. Hopefully, these seeds – these letters – will fall on rich soil and bear much fruit.

Now, I'd like to introduce a fellow parishioner I've come to know and respect as a friend through our work, together, at the Nomadic Shelter. Angela Johnson will share her path to receiving God's seeds here at Holy Trinity.

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Lectionary: 103