

LIVING FAITH

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
JULY 12, 2020

THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY—Matthew 13:1-9

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

The Parable of the Sower is a well-known parable. It is found in three of the four Gospels: Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20 and Luke 8:4-15. A parable is a story that makes sense if you take it at surface level, but always has an even deeper meaning. Jesus starts and ends this parable with the word “Listen!” This must mean that he has something very important for us to attend to in this story. Let’s start with the sower. This story is about a sower who is not very careful! This sower sows the seed anywhere and everywhere. As a result, it doesn’t always fall in the soil best suited to growing. Some seed falls on the path. There’s no soil at all there, so it just becomes food for the birds. Some seed falls on rocky soil, and so there’s no way for the seed to put down roots; when the sun comes out, this seed shrivels up and dies in the heat. Some seed falls among thorns, which choke the good seed. And some seed falls on good soil. This is the seed that produces the grain that grows tall and strong, and feeds people.

TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- If this parable is not really about a sower and seed, what do you think it’s really about?
- What is Jesus trying to say through this parable?
- Who do you think the Sower really is?
- What do you think the seed really is?
- What do the four different kinds of soil really mean? What does the soil represent?



JESUS TEACHES THROUGH PARABLES THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Jesus was a truly great teacher. When he taught people, he often used parables. Parables are stories that stick in our minds. We remember them easily. That's because parables are stories that work at two different levels. At the first level, the surface level, parables make sense. They are good stories in themselves. But there is a deeper level to the parables that Jesus tells. There is a story beneath the story! In a parable, every element stands for something else; everything takes on a deeper meaning. That's why Jesus starts and ends his telling of this parable with the word "Listen!" To really listen is to hear more than the words themselves. To really listen is to hear beneath and between the words, and to hear what is really being communicated.

So, let's think about that. And let's start with the Sower, because that's where Jesus starts. The Sower is God. The Seed is the Word of God. The soil is the human heart, the heart that receives the Word. And there are many types of "soil," many kinds of human hearts. The picture below might be one way to think of the human heart.

Parable of the Sower

Heart Types

			
Blind Heart	Rocky Heart	Rebellious Heart	Remaining Heart
Heart's disposition blinds hearer from grasping God's Message.	Enthusiastic at first to God's Word, Rocky Heart shallow & lacks will to strengthen initial gift.	Heart partially commits to Christ, leaving disastrous vulnerability to worldly desires & concerns.	Heart fully dedicated to Jesus is firmly established, reaping fruit of righteousness plentifully.
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LOOKING INTO YOUR OWN HEART... WHAT KIND OF HEART IS YOURS?

The seed sometimes falls on the path. This is the blind heart, the heart that can't receive the Word of God.

The seed sometimes falls among rocks. The rocks represent the heart that is open and enthusiastic at first, but loses interest or energy quickly, and can't seem to follow through.

The seed sometimes falls among thorns. The thorns represent the rebellious heart, the heart that wants to commit, but many things get in the way, making it difficult to follow through.

The seed also can fall on rich, fertile soil. The rich soil represents the human heart that is open, ready and willing to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

How would you describe your own heart? What kind of soil are you?

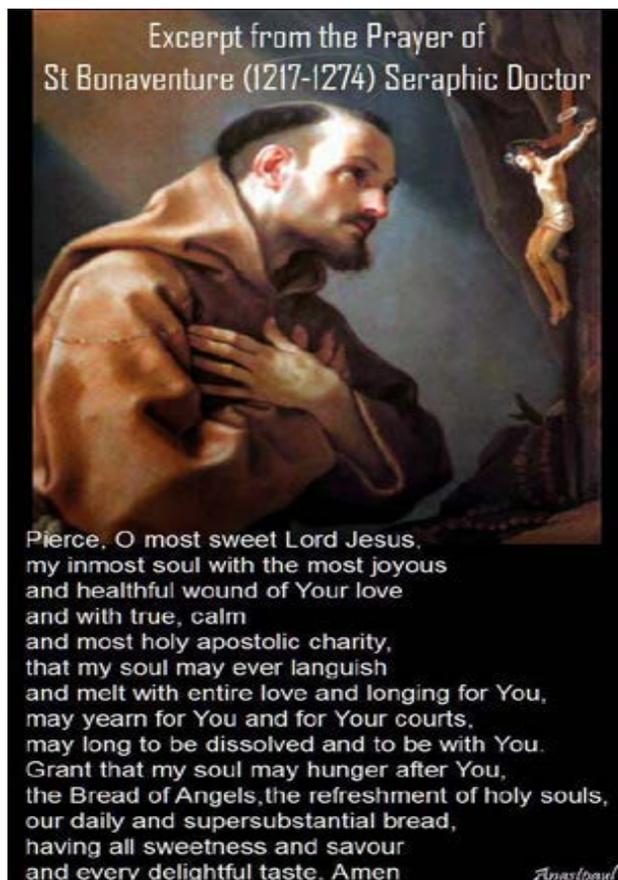
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15 ST. BONAVENTURE BISHOP DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

Who is St. Bonaventure?
Who was St. Bon's School named for?

Born in Bagnorea, Italy, to Giovanni di Fidenza and Maria Ritell in 1221, just five years before the death of Saint Francis, Saint Bonaventure was baptized John. He received the name Bonaventure when he entered the Order of Friars Minor. Bonaventure entered the Franciscans around 1243 as a member of the Roman Province.

He attended the University of Paris studying under the founder of the Franciscan school there, Alexander of Hales, receiving his *licentiate* in 1248. This degree afforded him the right to teach, which he did until his election as Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor in 1257, an office he held until May 1274.

His biography of St. Francis was adopted as the official biography of the Order in 1263. In 1273, he was made a cardinal and named the bishop of Albano by Pope Gregory X. While attending the Council of Lyon, he died suddenly on Sunday, July 15, 1274.



Bonaventure remained a simple man of faith and holiness; his life and administration governed by prayer and reflection. Legends have it that when the papal legates came to give him his cardinal's hat, they found him washing dishes. As a theologian, Bonaventure was able to reflect on the practical aspects of life and see how they interacted with the insights of faith—truly an incarnational approach, which is so typically Franciscan. He was a well-seasoned philosopher and theologian capable of thinking things through carefully in the light of reason drawing truly academic yet pastoral conclusions. He is considered the second founder of the Franciscan Order.

When Bonaventure was canonized, Pope Sixtus IV wrote: *Bonaventure was great in learning, but no less great in humility and holiness. His innocence and dove-like simplicity were such that Alexander of Hales, the renowned doctor whose disciple Saint Bonaventure became, used to say of him that it seemed as though Adam had never sinned in him.*

The Parable of the Sower



But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. Matthew 13:23a (NIV)

Match the words in the box with the correct definition.

1. _____ A small, usually hard part of a plant from which a new plant can grow
2. _____ The part of a plant which grows down into the earth
3. _____ Covered with stones
4. _____ Small, sharp, pointed growths on the stem of a plant
5. _____ A person who owns or takes care of a farm
6. _____ Plants such as grain, vegetables, or fruit grown by farmers
7. _____ To put seeds in the ground so that plants will grow
8. _____ Not deep
9. _____ The upper layer of earth that may be dug or plowed and in which plants grow
10. _____ A way made by or for people walking on the ground

farmer	seed	rocky	shallow	soil
sow	path	thorns	root	crop

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Prayer During a Pandemic

*Loving God, Holy One,
Your desire is for our wholeness and well-being.
We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering
of our world at this time. We grieve precious lives lost and
vulnerable lives threatened. We ache for ourselves and
our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future.
We pray: May love, not fear, go viral.
Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned
with the common good.
Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new
and creative ways to come together in spirit and in
solidarity.
Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence,
You, the God who does not abandon, You, the Holy One,
breathing within us,
breathing among us,
breathing around us
in our beautiful yet wounded world.*

- Sisters of IHM, Scranton, Pennsylvania

Message from Archbishop Hundt regarding
Archdiocesan Guidelines for Parish Church
and Pastoral Ministry at Alert Level 2.

Click [here](#) for a copy of the Archbishop's
message.

COVID-19 Parish Church and Pastoral
Ministry Guidelines while Operating
under Alert Level 2.

A copy of these guidelines can be found
[here](#).