

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
(Isaiah 55:10-11 / Matthew 13:1-23)
12.07.2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

Our God is a munificent lover! As the sower sows his seed with prodigality not only on rich soil, but also on the edge of the path, on patches of rock and among thorns, so God sows his seed, his word, by speaking to us, to all of us, whatever our situation in life may be. God does not speak only to those who are considered to be just or perfect, but also to those who are sinners, and even public sinners. Who among us is not a sinner? God speaks to those who are weak, those who fall again and again into the same trap, or those who are depressed. Who among us is never weak, falling again and again into the same trap or depressed? God speaks to those who are addicted. Who among us is not addicted to one thing or another?

God speaks and very often we fail to listen to Him, but God does not become silent because of our offence. He continues to speak. Welcome or unwelcome, He speaks to us. And suddenly his perseverance, I would even dare to say his obstinacy in our regard is rewarded. As a result his word can bear abundant fruit within us. Yes God is a munificent lover who loves us all and always, who speaks to all of us in season and out of season.

God speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures publicly heard in Church services and privately meditated upon in Lectio Divina – our prayerful reading of the Scriptures-.

But God also speaks to us through many other means. Let us not be afraid to enlarge our horizon. We believe that “In the beginning was the Word... Through the Word all things came into being...” (Jn 1:1) One of the consequences of this opening verse of St John’s gospel is that God speaks to us through the book of nature which is God’s creation. Colours, smells, sounds, taste, harmony in nature, all speak to us about the kindness, the bounty of God for humankind. The beauty of nature is God’s gift, God’s love offered to us.

God speaks to us through all our brothers and sisters in humanity who were created by Him in his own image and likeness. There is something of God in what they are, what they do and what they say. It is up to us to listen to them.

God speaks to us through the Church which is the Body of Christ, God’s word made flesh. God speaks to us through the members of the Church and through the sacraments.

Most of the time, the Lord does not speak to us openly, with words whose meaning imposes itself, but in parables, that is to say enigmatically. Parables use images of ordinary life to which it is easy to relate. But parables are also a kind of riddle, a comparison: “The kingdom of God is like....or the kingdom of God may be compared to...”. A parable is a language which does not impose itself. When Jesus speaks to us in parables, he respects our freedom, He does not impose himself. Only those who listen attentively to what Jesus says and reflect upon it can hear and understand his message. Our listening must be active. If we want to understand a parable, our mind and heart need to be searching, waiting to go further and deeper, inhabited by a desire to see, to hear, to find, to understand. We read in St Matthew’s gospel: “Ask and it will be given to you, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you”. In the Prologue to his Rule for monks, Saint Benedict asks: “Is there anyone who yearns for life and desire to see good

days"? Asking, searching, knocking, yearning for life, desiring to see are the attitudes required of us if we are to understand a parable, to understand the Lord speaking to us. The Lord wants us to be alive, awake, searching, unsatisfied, hungry, thirsty. Then we will be ready to hear Him.

The Lord loves us and speaks to us. The Lord speaks to us in parables. He sows his seed in us. What kind of soil are we? How do we receive his word?

Do we listen to the Word of God without seeking or waiting for anything? In that case we will not and we cannot hear and understand.

Do we listen to the word of God, understand it and then forget about it as soon as we have heard it?

Do we listen to the word of God and understand it immediately but superficially, because we have no roots and are unsettled? When trials and tribulations arise, do we just give up immediately?

Do we hear the word of God but the cares of the world and the seduction of riches in our heart and mind choke it?

Or do we hear the Word of God, accept it, cherish it, understand it, and consequently bear the abundant fruit awaited from us? This abundant fruit is both the work of God in us and through us, and our cooperation with the Lord by our putting into practice what we have heard.

Let us ask the Lord for the grace of a heart which is good soil, a searching and listening heart, a humble and recollected heart, in which the Word of God can take flesh, a heart like Mary's heart in which the Word of God took flesh and came into the world.

Amen.