

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew (*Mt 13:3-9*)

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seeds fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – What Type of Soil Am I?

The first three types of unproductive soil. Some of the seeds (represent the Word of God) did not fall on suitable soil (represents hearts) that will bring forth good fruits (represent conversion and turning to God). The reasons are: as soon as the Word is planted, the devil (represented by the birds) came and carried it away, whilst those seeds that fell on rocky ground represent those who have no depth in faith and lose it as soon as persecution comes. Those seeds that fall among thorns represent the people whose faith is choked out by the undue anxieties and trials of this life. Undue anxieties and worries are a great discouragement to faith! We have to be very vigilant to guard our precious faith and to practise heroic self-control to keep all these negative feelings in their proper place i.e. outside our hearts so that they will not poison and kill our faith.

The Good Soil. Can we be a one hundredfold productive Christian, the best indicated in this Scripture passage? Does God want us to be a hundredfold Christian? In fact, God commands us to be as fruitful as we can. *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples (John 15:8)*. To be fruitful in the Christian sense gives glory to God, and distinguishes ourselves from non-believers as followers of Christ! This exhortation for us to be fruitful continues in the letter of Paul (*Colossians 1:10-11*): *'And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might..'*

Do we want to be a hundredfold productive Christian? Assuming that this is so, then the first important step is to make a life-changing decision that we do indeed want to reach out for this. Then we gear all our actions towards achieving this end. We can be assured that God will be very pleased with our decision and will be working together with us to achieve this for His greater glory! *I can do all things through the One who empowers me within (Philippians 4:13)*. We are assured that God's power is available to us. How do we become hundredfold productive Christians? Again the teaching of Christ is very instructive: *"No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me" (John 15:4)*.

In our Catholic Church we have so many special helps: the Mass, the Sacraments, Mother Mary, etc – God's special and indispensable graces to His Catholic believers. Through the Sacraments, we are made new creation in grace in Christ, freed from the bondage and slavery of sin (the overpowering obstacle to fruitfulness in the Christian sense), adopted as children of God, nourished and strengthened spiritually, purified and cleansed of our sins and had them removed from us as far as the east is from the west! (cf Psalm 103:12). Through Christ, we are empowered to deepen and perfect our Christian virtues and to live in His righteousness and fruitfulness. In Him, we are empowered to live lives of victorious Christian living! Yes, in Christ we can become holy as God is holy!

Through God's Word we are taught how to live successfully and fruitfully as children of God.

Joshua 1:8: This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then, you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. We see here that every Christian who wants to be a fruitful one has to be rooted in God's Word. Through prayer and rootedness in the Word of God we are tuned into God, we learn to walk in His ways, we can discern His will and are strengthened to do His holy will.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, thank You for inviting me to become a hundredfold productive Christian today. Give me the wisdom to understand that the eternal value of a thing or action is very different from its earthly success. Of utmost importance to You Lord is the salvation of souls. I share Your divine mission of saving souls. This is my highest mission. What You are concerned about is not my earthly success but my love relationship with You, and how I can help draw others to You by my life as a Christian. Help me Lord to be a true, fruitful and fearless disciple of Yours! For I know You are with me always. This is Your promise. Mary, Protectress of the Faith, pray for me. Thank You Jesus, praise You, Jesus.