

Reflection for Saturday 19 September

Jesus is an excellent teacher because the illustrations he uses to explain his teaching are based on human experiences to which his hearers can relate. These illustrations include: a man attacked by muggers and left for dead at the side of the road and then rescued by an unexpected stranger, a son who has gone off the rails and eventually realizes his mistakes and returns home only to be received into the arms of a loving father., a man who searches for a lost sheep, a woman who sweeps her house in order to find a lost coin and so on.

The gospel reading at this morning's Mass is about the Parable of the Sower, known to all of us. So let's look at it and hear what our Lord is saying. The question I want to ask is why did the sower sow in the way he did? Jesus must have seen him walking along the path with a shallow basket attached to him, leaving his hands free to scatter the seed in all directions. We might say he was being somewhat wasteful in allowing some of the seed to miss the good soil which would produce the best results. But that is to miss the point of the parable.

Our Lord is saying to his hearers how generous God is with his word. Except for the seed on the path, which is immediately eaten by the birds, the seed in the rocky and thorny ground did produce some result. In his explanation of the parable to his disciples he likens the various types of soil to people who hear the word of God. Those people represented by the poor soil do have an experience of God's word and they make a positive response, although in the end a very unsatisfactory one. Only those represented by the good soil make the response God wants. In vs 15 in the 8th chapter of St Luke from where the gospel reading comes, Jesus says, "hearing the word, they hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience."

What is this parable about? It is all about evangelization. The generosity of the sowing reflects the generosity of God's word being liberally proclaimed. The Church has to be like the sower and use every opportunity to proclaim God's word, even if the results are poor. We have to remember that Jesus tells us to go out and proclaim the word in all kinds of situations. We must not leave any stone unturned. Yes, at times we have to be involved in politics because they affect people's lives. What Jesus doesn't say is that we have to be successful. We have to be faithful to him, success is up to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Remember Jesus's words to all of us: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide."

Roger Watson