

LIVING FAITH

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. JOHN'S

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!'

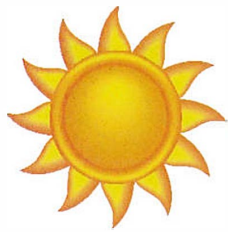


REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

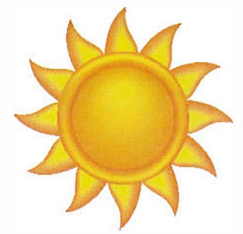
When we hear this story, we often focus on the seed... we all remember well the image of the seed that fell on the path and was eaten by the birds, or the seed that fell on rocky ground and flourished for a time, but then withered. These are great images, but they are not the Good News.

The Good News is the Sower, a sower who is so generous that he just throws seeds around, scattering them in a random manner. This is our God. God is generous. Our God is never stingy. God pours out good things and gifts in abundance. God only knows how to do one thing, and that one thing is to bless. Everywhere and always, God is scattering blessings. Do we have eyes to see? Do we have ears to hear?

But that's not all. If our God is bountiful and generous, and if we are made in the image and likeness of God, then how are we called to be? We are called to be generous, loving, and bountiful, people of blessing in the midst of our world, wherever we find ourselves. Today, heed the one most important word in this Gospel reading—"Listen."



SUMMER ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS



HAVE AN ICE-CREAM PARTY



WRITE A LETTER TO A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO LIVES FAR AWAY



SPEND A DAY AT THE BEACH

MAKE FRESH FRUIT JUICE OR SHAKES



GO FOR A WALK AT SUNSET



LIE ON THE DECK AND WATCH THE STARS

HAVE A BUBBLE-BLOWING COMPETITION

MAKE HOME-MADE POPSICLES



**WORK ON THE FAMILY TREE
TELL STORIES ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU ADD TO IT!**

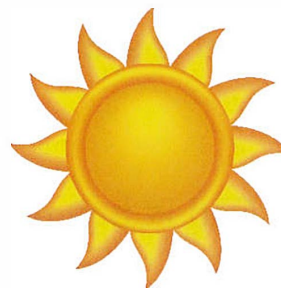
HAVE A PIZZA PARTY

HAVE A BARBECUE NIGHT



PLANT SOME FLOWERING SEEDS

LEARN A NEW SPORT



MAKE A CARD FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL

HAVE A GAME NIGHT

ORGANIZE A TREASURE HUNT

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I Believe...

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH: OUR DESPERATE NEED TO GOD'S HELP (part 1) Reflections by Fr. Gregory Carruthers, SJ

Original Sin and our own personal sins are not directly mentioned in the Creed. This is because sin is not a Mighty Deed of God, but something disastrous we do to ourselves. Sin is ultimately irrational because it is an act of ingratitude personally against God and his immense goodness and boundless love for us. The "forgiveness of sins" which is a Mighty Deed of God, is mentioned in the Creed.

Original Sin (The Fall) is mankind's first and monumental, free and deliberate rejection of God's offer of friendship and love. It is "original" because it was committed at mankind's origins (Adam and Eve). The word "Fall" describes the destructive and violent effects that befell the human race immediately upon the commission of original sin, a fall from God's grace.

We know about Original Sin in two ways. First, our own experience tells us there is something radically wrong in our world, even within our relationships and within our own hearts. Secondly, we know only by Divine Revelation what exactly did go wrong at humanity's origins and why its consequences are universal and so disastrous, and then we learn of God's merciful response.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus reveals God's universal mercy and superabundant grace in redeeming us from the disastrous effects of original sin and of our own personal sins.



FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER

The **Feast of the Most Holy Redeemer** is observed on the third Sunday in July by Redemptorists and in the cities of Venice and Rome as the *Festa del Redentore*. The reflection below is offered to us by the Superior General of the Redemptorists, Fr. Michael Brehl, CSsR.

OUR REDEEMER, OUR NEAREST BLOOD RELATIVE

The root word for “redeemer” in the Hebrew Scriptures is go-el. This word (and concept) comes from the family structure of Israel. The go-el - redeemer - was that relative, bound to the person in difficulty through blood, who was obliged to come to the aid of the one in trouble.

For the Israelite, it seems that the worst fate possible was to be cut off, isolated, alienated and alone. Is it any wonder that this ideal of the go-el - the redeemer as the nearest blood relative - becomes the best-loved image for God and God’s relationship with Israel during the days of the exile?

The biblical image of the Redeemer as the “nearest-blood-relative” can offer us a helpful image for today. “Redemption” implies three important aspects: restoration, liberation and transformed relationship. We find these aspects find in Second Isaiah and elsewhere in the Scriptures. This is not to exclude the need for redemption from sin, but we also need redemption from loss and degradation, from oppression and injustice, from alienation and isolation.

This is the redemption we encounter in Jesus - the One who has freely become our brother, so that we can become sisters and brothers, daughters and sons. Our Redeemer is not an outsider. He comes to us within the human family. The mystery of redemption begins with the Incarnation. It is revealed more clearly in the paschal mystery. Redemption in his blood might be as much about relationship as it is about sacrifice. He has become our “blood-brother.”

We might do well to explore more deeply those three aspects of biblical redemption - restoration, liberation, relationship - and their meaning for us today. What is restoration without restorative justice? It seems to me that we too often get caught up in retributive or punitive justice. Movements like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa might have a great deal to teach us. How can we speak of liberation without addressing the unjust and oppressive structures which govern so much of human society? The search for justice, peace and the integrity of creation are an integral part of redemption. This has been stressed in official Church teaching and, lately, in Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si*. Is there any redemption without the transformation of all human relationships? As an introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan, the scribe asks, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus suggests that we discover those for whom we can be neighbour, and then “go and do the same yourself”.

Is it possible to dream of a world redeemed - a world in which each other person is truly my brother, my sister - because the Redeemer is brother to us all? I’d like to finish with a story of Dom Helder Camara, the former Archbishop of Recife in Brazil:

One day, a man came to Dom Helder for help. He had lost his job, and he had a family to support. He was not looking for a handout, but for employment - with the dignity and stability that a job would provide. After some conversation, Dom Helder discovered that he had some experience with cars. Dom Helder told him: “I know a man who owns a garage. I will call and see if he can hire you”. So, Dom Helder called, and told the garage owner that his brother was out of work. Would he consider hiring Dom Helder’s brother?

The garage owner said to himself - the Archbishop’s brother is out of work. How can I say no? “Of course I will hire him, Dom Helder. Send him over.” Only later did the garage owner realize that his new employee had a different name from the Archbishop. He felt like he’d been fooled. So, he phoned the Archbishop and said: “What did you mean telling me that this man was your brother? He’s not your brother.” Dom Helder calmly assured him: “He is most certainly my brother. After all, did Christ not say that we are all brothers and sisters?”