



Christ in Our Neighborhood

*Baptized
in the Lord*

Prayer

O God, you show the light of your truth to those who go astray so that they may return to the right path. Give all, who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians, the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does it honor. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11

At the very first moment of creation, God sent out his Word. And He tells us through the Prophet Isaiah, that every word that goes forth from His mouth will not return to Him void, but shall do His will, achieving the end for which He sent it.

When God sent out His Word and created the universe and everything in it, He knew your name.

For you, He has a very special plan, a purpose and a promise. He created you to know him and the love He has for you. He gave you an intellect and a will so that you may freely love Him in return and do the good you were created for.

He promises to be with you along the path of life. For you are like a seed planted on fertile ground, that He will water and nurture, so that your life may produce good fruit.

Questions

- What is the plan and purpose God has for you?
- When has He fed, nurtured, and/or pruned you to bear good fruit?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Romans 8:18-23

Great and wonderful is God's plan for us. St. Paul said, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him."

From the moment of Creation, when He sent out his Word, He set his plan into motion, and it will not return to him void.

All of creation is groaning in labor pains as it brings to fulfillment God's plan. And we, who through our baptism were made Children of God, are groaning with creation as we eagerly await in joyful expectation the promises of God.

God's Word will achieve the end for which it was sent for those who love Him. On the last day, He will wipe every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain. He will make all things new again. He will raise up our mortal bodies to life and we will live in unity and peace in his presence forevermore.

Question

St. Paul considers the sufferings of this time to be nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us.

- What does this mean for you?
- What do you imagine heaven will be like?

Christ in Our Neighborhood is the evangelization program of the Diocese of Phoenix.

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 13:1-23

It takes good soil for seeds to flourish and to be fruitful. We tend to the soil that we live in, so that the Word of God once planted in our hearts may grow.

We need to soften the hard soil of our hearts, which has been hardened by those who have walked upon us and made us angry and resentful.

We need to remove the stones of doubt and fear which enclose us, block the light, and leave little room in which to grow.

We need to sink our roots deep into rich soil, so that we may not fade or be carried away when trials and hardships come.

We need to remove the weeds and thorns of sin that restrict us and keep us from flowering and loving as we should.

As a baptized Child of God, blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. To you are granted the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

But when we don't hold firm to the commands of God, sin enters in to bring death to the Word planted in our hearts. When we tend the soil of our hearts and minds, we make a place in which the Word of God will bring blessings, "a hundred, or sixty, or thirty-fold."

Question

How can we work on removing the weeds and thorns of sin that keep us from being the best version of ourselves?

This Week's Task

- Listen attentively to the Gospel as it is proclaimed at Mass this Sunday. Nurture the Word in your heart by reflecting and acting upon it throughout your week.

Group Prayer

The leader invites the group to pray the following words together.

Lord Jesus, plant your Word in our hearts and make it fruitful in our lives.

Keep us free from sin and make us a fertile place where your love can grow. Let the Word which you have planted in our hearts not return to you void, but may it provide a rich harvest, a hundred, or fifty, or thirty-fold. Amen

Psalm

Psalm Response: The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

You have visited the land and watered it; greatly have you enriched it. God's watercourses are filled; you have prepared the grain.

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

Thus have you prepared the land: drenching its furrows, breaking up its clods, softening it with showers, blessing its yield.

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

You have crowned the year with your bounty, and your paths overflow with a rich harvest; The untilled meadows overflow with it, and rejoicing clothes the hills.

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

The fields are garmented with flocks and the valleys blanketed with grain. They shout and sing for joy.

R. The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

Conclude with an Our Father