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Friday's Gospel: Suffocating the Word

Gospel for Friday in the 16th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 13:18-23*)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Hear then the parable of the sower.
When anyone hears the word of the
kingdom and does not understand it,
the evil one comes and snatches
away what is sown in his heart; this
is what was sown along the path. As
for what was sown on rocky ground,
this is he who hears the word and

immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

Commentary

Pope Francis called the parable of the sower the “mother” of all parables, because it tells us about two essential things: how to listen to the Divine

Word, and how God's heart works, sowing his seed in all people without distinction (cf. *Angelus*, July 12, 2020).

But it is also one of the parables for which we have not only its narration, but also an explanation given by Jesus himself. While revealing to us the heart of the Father, he encourages us to look into our own heart, with the desire to prepare ourselves better to become fertile soil.

As we can see, our Lord warns about three obstacles that prevent the harmonious development of the divine seed in our soul: *not understanding, not having deep roots, being seduced by worldly cares and riches*. These three scenarios can end up suffocating the Word that is meant to fill our life with joy, making our life sterile.

First, *not understanding*. Clearly, Jesus is not referring to the impossibility of grasping fully the divine mysteries. For example, we will never fully “understand” the Holy Trinity. Our Lord is referring to one’s interior attitude. If we lack in our lives the willingness to study matters, to dedicate hours to deepening in our knowledge of the faith, to embrace the fruitfulness of silence, we will hardly be able to bear the expected fruit. Our life will remain superficial, filled with noise and ideology.

Second, *not having deep roots*. It is like the dream that Saint Josemaría once had. People who want to be holy, but have no interior life, go through the world insecure, like a person who travels by plane but riding on the wings (cf. *Friends of God*, 18). Without prayer and piety, without the Eucharist, without the sacraments, there can be no fruit.

Third, *being seduced by worldly cares and riches*. Neither are we who want to follow Christ exempt from the temptation of vanity, wealth, success, luxury. We can easily forget that the fruit of our labor is for God, and that the rest is dust and ashes.

Therefore we need to have recourse to the fertile ground par excellence: Holy Mary. With the patience of a Mother, she will help us to cut out everything in our life that is a hindrance to the Word bearing fruit. Sometimes it will hurt. But there is no other way, for as her Son assured us: “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (*Jn* 12:24).

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