

# The Living Word

**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**

**16 July 2023**

## **First Reading** Is 55:10-11

*The rain makes the earth fruitful.*

Thus says the Lord: 'As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

## **Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 64:10-14. R. Lk 8:8**

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

1. You care for the earth, give it water, you fill it with riches.  
Your river in heaven brims over to provide its grain. (R.)
2. And thus you provide for the earth; you drench its furrows, you level it, soften it with showers, you bless its growth. (R.)
3. You crown the year with your goodness. Abundance flows in your steps, in the pastures of the wilderness it flows. (R.)
4. The hills are girded with joy, the meadows covered with flocks, the valleys are decked with wheat. They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (R.)

## **Second Reading** Rom 8:18-23

*All creation is waiting for the revelation of the children of God.*

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**The seed is the word of God,**

**Christ is the sower;**

**all who come to him will live for ever.**

**Alleluia!**

## **Gospel** Mt 13:1-23

**(or shorter form Mt 13:1-9)**

*A sower went out to sow.*

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

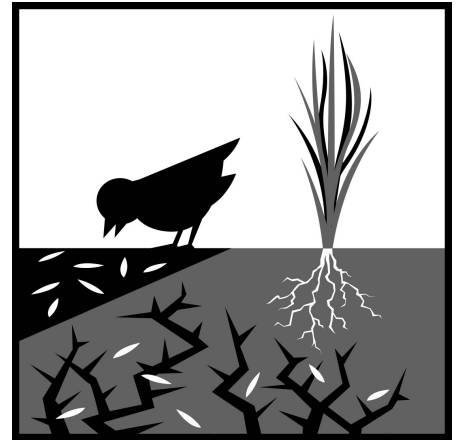
He said, 'Imagine a sower going out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, 'Why do you talk to them in parables?' 'Because' he replied 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away. The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

You will listen and listen again, but not understand,  
see and see again, but not perceive.  
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,  
their ears are dull of hearing,  
and they have shut their eyes,  
for fear they should see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their heart,  
and be converted  
and be healed by me.

'But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it.

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path. The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing. And the one who received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and understands it; he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'



## **Reflection** by Fr Michael Tate

Here is Jesus telling another story about nature, in this case about soil good enough to bear a crop. Is he just a keen observer of the farmers of his time? No.

Throughout the Gospels there is a harmony between Jesus and the natural creation of a profound kind.

But St Paul intuited that link at a profound level in the case of the Risen Lord. This led him to make the most amazing claim that:

*'The creation itself would be set free from its slavery to decay in order to share the freedom associated with the glory of the children of God.'*

We, and the whole cosmos, share the legacy of a common destiny brought about by the powerful victory of Christ over the final instance of decay, destruction and every type of death.

We could pause a moment to pray with the angels as we do at every Mass:

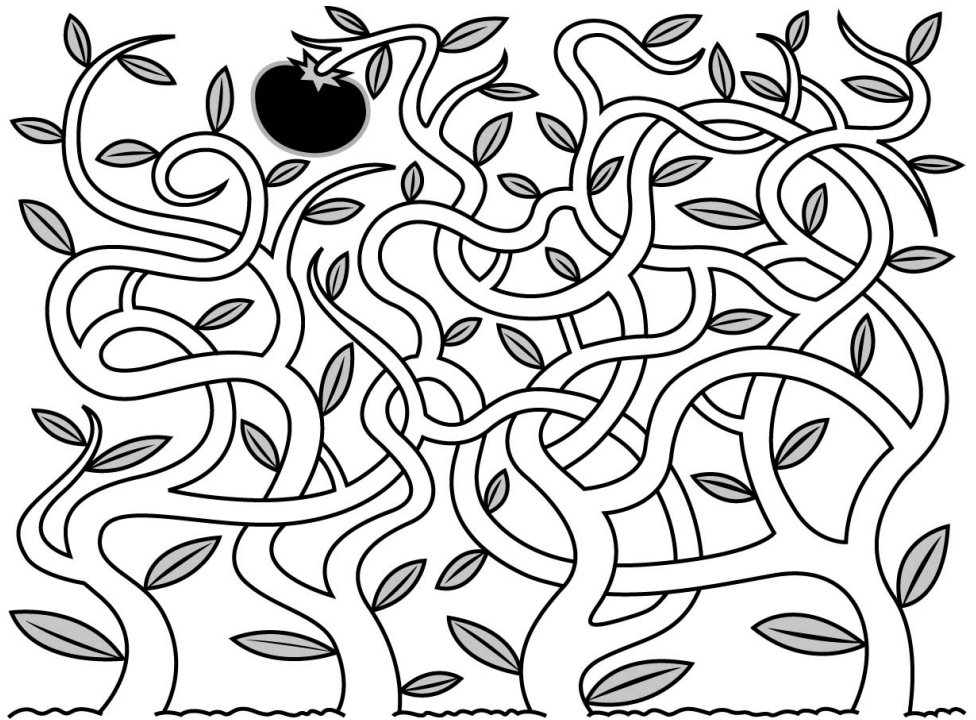
*'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.'*

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**S**t Mary of Magdala was a disciple of Christ who was healed by him when he cast out seven devils. She stood at the foot of the cross as Jesus died, and went to the tomb to anoint his body on the morning of Easter Sunday. She was the first witness to Jesus' resurrection when she found his tomb empty. In St Mark's Gospel, it is Mary Magdalene to whom the risen Jesus first appears and further to this, in St John's account, Jesus gives her a message to pass on to his brethren. Since the time of Pope Gregory the Great, a tradition in the Western church arose that identified Mary Magdalene as the unnamed sinner who anointed Christ's feet, and Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. But since 1969 the new Roman calendar has rejected this belief entirely.



Which of these four plants is the one bearing fruit?

## Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



birds  
boat  
crowd  
farmer  
Galilee  
Lake  
road  
shore  
soil  
stories  
sun  
teach

R	L	M	O	K	U	O	H	G	E	R	O	H	S	H	M	N
H	F	J	W	A	C	C	U	A	A	L	F	W	O	C	J	G
A	R	M	X	P	K	G	U	Q	X	L	A	A	E	J	L	J
T	G	R	U	M	C	F	G	X	P	X	I	K	F	C	S	K
T	X	R	C	R	Q	U	O	Z	C	E	X	L	E	T	Q	C
D	K	V	N	C	H	V	F	F	L	F	Q	F	E	H	J	P
J	D	Y	T	Q	P	O	O	W	K	S	S	C	O	E	E	I
F	M	W	R	Q	X	E	R	K	H	S	W	O	L	R	R	N
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K	H	C	A	W	J	J	N	E	X	I	E	E	A	B	T	R
Y	X	P	V	F	X	U	W	S	Y	A	V	R	Q	I	O	O
R	S	A	A	S	G	B	S	C	C	C	M	Q	D	R	A	A
A	Q	W	S	J	H	Y	U	H	U	E	J	L	S	D	R	D
B	W	X	F	H	I	X	N	S	R	W	U	P	R	S	W	L
O	O	B	J	C	B	U	X	S	I	V	L	O	P	P	L	D