

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Aug 10th 2013

The Harvest is for All

“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor.” (2 Corinthians 9:9)

Today’s readings tell us who we are: sower, seed, and harvest. The sower rises early and casts seeds out into the world. Small living things will surely follow. Will the rains come? Much is not known, but we face the future with hope.

We are the seeds buried in the soil. Some transformations are hidden; we wanted to map out every step of the way, but often we are carried in darkness. The power that unfolds within us draws from another. Time passes. The harvest arrives. Fruit is heavy and slides into our hands. We smell the fullness of life and celebrate. This is for all.

Some food in our fridge comes from local gardens. Most is trucked to stores from distant places. The workers who pick and process the food often live on the road through the growing seasons. They put their children in cars and travel to Colorado to work in the onion fields, to Idaho for the beets, or to Illinois to detassel corn. We do not see the hands that bring in the harvest.

Pope Francis’ first trip was to the island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Italy, where immigrants sailing from Africa arrive. He spoke of the globalization that dries up local markets and sends masses of people off in search of work to sustain their families. Crossing the sea, like crossing the desert, claims many lives. The traffickers, like the end consumers, profit from cheap labor. No one sees the trail of bodies left behind.

The ruthless pursuit of profits creates what the Pope calls “the globalization of indifference.” In his talk on Lampedusa, he said “these, our brothers and sisters, seek to leave difficult situations in order to find a little serenity and peace, they seek a better place for themselves and for their families--but they found death. How many times do those who seek this...do not find welcome, do not find solidarity? And their voices rise up even to God...Where is your brother? Who is responsible for this blood?”

The topic of immigration is difficult. The Pope travels where many fear to go. Like him, we can be bolder in our words and actions. Time is short. The abundance of the harvest comes from God; it is for all to share.

Jeanne Schuler