

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jul 13th 2014

Lessons from Nature

“From the heavens...the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful.” (Isaiah 55:10)

After a dry spell, the rains fall like a blessing to soften the cracked earth. Seeds awaken to push down roots and the dour land springs up green overnight. The long sleep is over but no one complains. The trek to the harvest begins with water from heaven that brings life back to the earth.

Sometimes we look no further than our self for salvation. Lured by poetic license, I wonder if I am the master of my fate, the keeper of my soul. Can I stand alone without anyone to lean on? Am I the unaided seed that releases its power at will? Like Prospero ruling his enchanted island, we are tempted by magic.

Our drunken dreams multiply the groanings of nature. When will this species wake up? No creature makes it on its own. No seed sprouts without spring showers and the long sunny days of summer. Like the clothes on our body that come from many places, we belong to each other. I am not the work of my hands. No one carries his load alone.

Even God does not stand alone. As Trinity, the Father begets the Word in Love. This love pours out into the world. Love invites, it does not coerce. The word is given, but I must open my hand to receive it. Many times we are forgetful, talky, worried, self-absorbed, and eager for a quick fix. Then, like rocks, we do not see or hear. The ground grows parched and the word cannot set down roots.

Jesus' disciples were perplexed: why speak in parables? They were the chosen ones; they were supposed to understand, but this story left them puzzled. Which seed am I? What does it mean? So they tricked Jesus into explaining the parable. Even his closest companions could not receive the word unaided. I can open my hand. But we need help to prepare the soil.

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