

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jul 24th 2015

Today's gospel reading would not require a homily or an online reflection, once Jesus has taken the time and effort to explain the meaning of the parable. What can one say after that? There is not much room for second-guessing Jesus, but there is room for some reflection on the seed itself that fell on the best soil.

In the parable there is a clear crescendo of soil conditions for growth. So in the best soil scenario we would spontaneously expect that the yield would be always 100-fold. Yet Jesus tells us that in some cases it was indeed 100-fold, but in some other cases it was only 60-fold or even 30-fold. What can the Lord be telling us through this? I believe the Lord is teaching us a twofold lesson.

First lesson: we cannot judge other people's yield. It may well be that others are offering optimum soil for growth, but they have been given low-yield grain. We just have no way of knowing what the Lord has planted in their hearts and any expectation on our side lacks a basis for assessment. This means that we simply cannot judge what may appear to us to be low yield.

Second lesson: self-perfectionism does not belong in the spiritual life for the parallel reason that we do not know what type of seed the Lord has planted in our own hearts. Even if we prepare optimum soil conditions, we do not have to yield the theoretically possible maximum, nor do we have to make it to the Guinness book of records. We do have to strive to yield the best we can do. Not necessarily the absolute best, but only our best. Our yield potential is not even well known to us. We just have to be good, faithful stewards of the seed planted in us.

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