

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Sep 19th 2015

With all of the attention, deserved as it surely is, to the beautiful and urgent *Laudate Si* by Pope Francis, I offer this reflection on today's Gospel about the sower and his attempts to sow seed that flourishes, connecting it to thoughts about the new encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home*.

Jesus says, when asked the meaning of the parable, "The seed is the word of God."

As Roman Catholics, we believe that the Pope has a particular ability to interpret for us the word of God. So it would seem that we must not whimsically ignore the words of Francis in this document. We are in moral peril, in my opinion, if we refuse to ponder his words seriously.

The seed does not thrive until it falls on "good soil." What are some elements of that soil in the reality of the situation of the world? What nutrients are needed to begin to bring balance to the current excesses that have resulted in dire poverty for so many, lack of clean water, difficult or impossible roads to clean air, to good education, tools that fulfill even the basic rights for a happy life. How might we outfit the sower in her pursuit of "good soil"?

For starters: familiarity with the words and arguments themselves, attained through reading and studying the letter alone or even better with others. Next, deep thought and prayer with what is revealed to us by our study; an analysis of the signs of the times in our own lives and encounters with reality.

Then, a willingness to leave our comfort zone and embrace with generosity the reality of the lives of others. Finally, an intentional attitude to uncover our fears, prejudices, barriers that currently impair our capacity for identifying ourselves as co-habitants with brothers and sisters from all parts of the world. connected and united in the willingness to actively cherish "our common home" of which Francis writes so urgently and graciously.

Perhaps we will discover other tools necessary for our pursuit of "good soil" wherein the word of God in us may flourish.

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