

JULY 12, 2020  
Sunday of the 15<sup>th</sup> Week in OT  
Matthew 13: 1-23

“LISTEN! A SOWER WENT TO SOW.”

Last July 6, we celebrated the feast day of a remarkable saint, St. Maria Goretti, patron of youth, young women, purity, and victims of rape. “She had a deep love for Jesus whom at age 10 she received in Communion. The following year, three months before her twelfth birthday, a neighbor named Alessandro Serenelli tried to force himself on her. When Maria resisted, Alessandro stabbed her repeatedly with a knife. She died the following day, July 6, 1902, after forgiving her assailant. “Yes, for the love of Jesus I forgive him...and I want him to be with me in Paradise.” Filled with shame, denial and bitterness, Alessandro was condemned to prison. However, the seed Maria planted gradually bore fruit. He experienced a profound conversion. Released after twenty-seven years, he went immediately to ask pardon of Maria's mother. Accompanying her to Christmas Mass, he spoke before the hushed congregation, acknowledging his sin and asking God's forgiveness and the pardon of the community. He testified in the cause for beatification and on June 24, 1950 stood in St. Peter's Square when Pope Pius XII declared St. Maria Goretti a saint. Alessandro Serenelli died on May 6, 1970 in the Capuchin convent where he worked as a gardener.”<sup>1</sup>

This is what our gospel wants to convey to us: a seed which yields an enormous harvest. Jesus Christ uses different methods and means to emphasize His message, and the best way is the parables, the day-to-day life experiences of the hearers. He conveys this message to illustrate the hidden treasures of everyday living. “Jesus' parable of the sower is aimed at the hearers of His word. There are different ways of accepting God's word and they produce different kinds of fruit accordingly. There is the prejudiced hearer

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<sup>1</sup> [www.stmaryvalleybloom.org/](http://www.stmaryvalleybloom.org/)

who has a shut mind. Such a person is unteachable and blind to what he or she doesn't want to hear. Then there is the shallow hearer. He or she fails to think things out or think them through; they lack depth. They may initially respond with an emotional reaction; but when it wears off their mind wanders to something else. Another type of hearer is the person who has many interests or cares, but who lacks the ability to hear or comprehend what is truly important. Such a person is too busy to pray or too preoccupied to study and meditate on God's word. Then there is the one whose mind is open. Such a person is at all times willing to listen and to learn. He or she is never too proud or too busy to learn. They listen in order to understand."<sup>2</sup>

Our gospel is urging us to let the Word of Jesus fall into good soil, so that it can produce prosperous harvest in our lives. We hear the Word of God most of the time in the church but most importantly we must hear, live, and practice the Word at home. We cannot have good leaders in the church or in the society, if we don't start planting the seed at home. As parents, we are the first teachers, first educators, first sower of faith, and we can only do that if we have strong foundation in faith and values. We need to put God in our home. If we elders and parents pray with our children from their early age, we treat each other with love, compassion and forgiveness, if we bring and join them in the mass, there's a great possibility that the seed we planted will take root and grow in our children's hearts. Maybe, it doesn't always happen, but there is a best chance that it will. We tend to forget what happened in the church or school, but we never forget what happens at home: the conflict, tension, hate, struggle or the peace, love, hope, and the help we received from one another. Most of the time, the ordinary things have an impact on most of us, a simple gesture of care, concern, and help. Who could ever forget the love of a mother, and a father? Whenever, their children got sick, they spend a lot of time in praying the rosary or in front of the tabernacle asking healing for their beloved. Who

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<sup>2</sup> [www.dailyscripture.net](http://www.dailyscripture.net)

could ever forget their mother or father, their grandmother or grandfather who bring them to the church to hear mass, who has a deep faith for Jesus? Looking back, our children will say: My mother, my father, my grandmother, my grandfather was a great mother, father, grandmother, grandfather because they brought me closer to God through their good example. My brothers and sisters, if we listen, receive God's word, and try to live it every day, we are scattering the seed for the younger generation and generations to come. If they see in us the faith that we have through our good example, even if we don't say it, they will recognize it.

To our youth, our young people, you can also plant a seed of faith to your fellow youth. Live a good living, be generous with God and with others, be patient, be understanding, be faithful to your Sunday Eucharist and be instrument of love for others. Practice your faith, resist temptations, be chaste and keep guard because love can wait, like St. Maria Goretti. For all of us, the seed that God planted, its growth depends on the type of soil where it is sown. The growth of God's grace in our lives all depends on how we receive it, nurture it, and share it. So, let us try our best to be the good soil that bears a hundredfold, another sixty, and in another thirty.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, give me an open mind and heart that I may look not only see, listen not only understand your Word so that it can take root in my receptive heart, ready to believe and willing to submit. Give me strength and perseverance to be a good soil and bear fruit. Use me and through my good example, I may bring others closer to you and produce bountiful harvest. Amen."