

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – July 15 and 16, 2017 – Reflection

Jesus stepped into the pulpit to preach, but He wasn't in a synagogue or in the Temple. It was a little fishing boat anchored in the harbor of Sea of Galilee. But, this was perhaps a more fitting podium for the great Fisher of Men since the anchor is the symbol of faith and faith is to be found in the vessel of the Church as she sails the seas of life fishing for souls to catch in the net of God's love.

The people on the shoreline were captivated by the words they heard coming from that little boat. For many of them, it was the first time they had ever heard Him speak and they marveled at how down-to-earth He seemed and yet, how His words lifted them up!

The first time most of us ever hear Jesus, we too come to hear Him speak on the waters. As we are sprinkled in Baptism's bath, each drop upon our little foreheads is like a seed, a time-release capsule filled with the message of God's love for us and what He asks of us as we sail on the seas, sometimes calm, sometimes stormy, of the lives He gives us to lead.

We are brought to these fruitful waters in the arms of adoring parents and Godparents who make the solemn promise to carry us to Jesus, to teach us of Jesus, to nurture faith in God and in the gospel in the community of the Church, until that day when, confirmed in the Holy Spirit, the seed takes root, spreads its branches to the Son, and bears fruit as the child, now grown, walks in faith.

We parents and Godparents make a solemn vow to carry our little children from Baptismal waters ever closer to God in the Church as the seed of faith begins to sprout ... a solemn vow before God Himself.

And yet, why is it that the seeds planted in so many young hearts fail to grow and bear fruit?

Could it be because many of us parents and Godparents have forgotten our vow, our solemn promise? How many of us are hardened to faith ourselves and trample on it in others - even little ones - so it can't take root in them either?

How many of us are so rocky in a faith we fail to nourish with prayer and study and service that, when a storm rocks us, we have no foundation and we throw away God and God in our children?

How many of us who grew up in faith, nurtured on the Bread of Life, filled with the love of God and love for our fellow man, allow the weeds and briars of too much work, too much play, too much comfort, too much stuff to choke off God and Church and neighbor as I build the temple of ME, as I make my kids disciples of the same religion of ME, MYSELF, and I?

The seed that God the Sower plants is good. The ground of the heart of the human soul is rich. The rain of God's grace is refreshing, and the food of Christ's Body and teaching is wholesome.

We parents and Godparents, we must see to the gift in ourselves first - you can't give to another what you don't have in yourself! But, you made a promise, before God, in the Church, that you would share the Word, the faith that was planted in you; that you would see that the seeds planted in your kids would grow and bear fruit.

Ya might've given up, slacked off along the way. But, ya DID give your word once, and ya can make good on your promise still. As long as there is breath in your lungs, as long as there is the tiniest spark of faith in your heart, it's not too late. God planted good seed in you and in your kids. It's time to take care of what He's planted. It's time to put in some work on the field of your faith: hoe the ground and loosen up the clods, pick some weeds, get rid of the rocks, and at last, get some kinda harvest outta this old garden!