

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - A 2020
Is. 55.10-11///Romans 8.18-23///Matt. 13.1-23

→a creative husband, hoping to surprise his wife for their anniversary, bought a beautiful ring she has wanted for quite some time.

→ring in hand, he put his imagination to work to find just the right package around which to cradle this shiny new treasure.

→what he came up with was those nesting box sets...you know the “box within a box” package that some use as a decorator item in homes.

→so he put the ring in the tiniest and last of the seven boxes...put a ribbon on the package and gave it to his wife.

→on the night of their anniversary she carefully removed the festive bow and opened the outside box only to find another box...she opened it and the next and the next.

→well about four boxes down she began to sense what was going on and her smile grew bigger and more joyous with the discovery of yet another small box until, at last, she opened the ring box and there, winking at her, was the gift from her life’s great love...

→such is the parable from our gospel reading today (and our celebration of RCIA Initiation / First Communion this weekend)

PAUSE

→the disciples ask ... “why do you speak to them in parables?”...that question is the **outside box** of our Lord’s entire teaching ministry...

→and to answer that question...Jesus tells a story about a farmer going out to his field at the beginning of the growing season and scattering some seed.

→with near reckless abandon...the farmer throws seed here, there and everywhere ...on ground of every description....

→some falls on the path that probably crisscrossed the field...some on rocky ground...some among the thorns...and finally some on what Jesus calls “good soil.”

→and then what happens....[well] **box one** finds birds gulping down the seed on the path...**box two** is a bit rocky where nothing grows...**box three** is prickly with thorns that chokes the fledging sprouts....but the **last box** contains the good soil that yields a plentiful harvest!

→[and] today as we gather...we might ask what box do we possess...what box have we opened...and what box in our lives still needs to be unwrapped.

PAUSE

→the point of today’s story is about determining how God’s word...God’s message...has taken root in our lives.

[→for our RCIA catechumens (Bill and Nicole)

[→for our young people making their first communion (Emma and Nathan)

...that word/message has been scattered and planted in their hearts and live over the past many months....and even through a very unusual detour that we have all endured...it has continued to develop and flourish....the good soil has allowed it to take root and grow.]

→this parable suggests that we who hear the words of Jesus are like that field scattered with seed in more ways than we can possible imagine....

→ in all of us there is good soil from which grows God’s life...

→and the point J. makes is that his message...in this world---in our community--- and---in our lives is something that needs to be cultivated and nurtured...LIKE ALL LIVING THINGS

→and that is the challenge before us today....

→to not just receive God's word...but to treasure it and put it into practice...

→God's Word...God's presence....has to seep into our being...into the very fiber of our soul...in the very same way water seeps into the roots of a plant...

→and secondly, we need to treasure God's Word...treasure God's presence...which means taking to "heart" the Word of God and considering what that means for us as we maneuver through life...

→i.o.w...this is about persevering in our faith and Christian calling....

→persevering in our faith and beliefs especially when things don't go our way or

→when it would just be easier to give up and walk away or even worse put God out of our lives because it is too much of a burden

...→and finally, we need to put all this into practice...acting on what our mind has received and what our heart has treasured

→ this is what Jesus is calling us to in today's Gospel

PAUSE

→it is an appropriate message...as we gather once again this week as members of God's family and renew and remember our commitment to our Church, our parish and to one another

[and as we welcome new members...as we welcome our young people to the table for the first time]

→it is an appropriate message in the midst of our busyness and sometime narrow focused way of life

→[and] it is an appropriate message as we profess our faith and live our belief...as we strive to back up our words with our actions and deeds

→the seed we hear about today.... is God's love, God's presence, in our lives

→the path...is the life we live each and every day...the choices we make, the decisions we face, the responsibilities we accept

→[and] our constant challenge is ...to continue opening all those boxes we face....the encounters we can't seem to escape....the attitudes we want to change....the fears we want to conquer and the hurts we want to heal....

→what's inside....we know all too well

God's Word.... **And**...God's presence

→What's left... is to open and share, live and treasure...the good seed that's a part of all of us.