

**OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH**  
**HOMILY FOR 15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (A)**  
**16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017**

Today and for the next two weeks Matthew gives us the good news in the form of parables.

A parable is a comparison where Jesus uses something that we know from our own lives to tell us something about God whom we do not know.

Today the parable is a story about the seed which a sower sowed by scattering it on the surface of the ground as they did in Jesus' time.

The seed then has to struggle to grow in whatever type of soil it lands.

"Imagine," says Jesus. What can this tell us about God?

God is the sower, the seed is his Word and we are the soil, so let's focus on the soil.

Jesus recognises four types of soil which represent four types of soul, all different.

Jesus understood our differences.

Soil does not choose to be the type of soil that it is; people do not choose their souls.

Soil will not improve itself, it needs cultivation; so do souls.

Jesus starts with the hardest type - seed falling on the path.

Paths have hard surfaces; seeds cannot put down roots and grow.

Some souls are hard and refuse to accept the Word of God.

They may have suffered abuse or tragedy and be unable to believe in a loving God.

Hard soil has to be softened by water; hard souls have to be softened by our compassion and commitment to God's justice.

Some soil is just a thin layer with rock underneath; some souls are open to God's word but have no depth.

They welcome God's word for superficial reasons, but are easily discouraged.

These may be pessimists and souls prone to depression or naturally restless with low attention spans.

It often happens with people who do RCIA or Alpha with great enthusiasm but afterwards, as the novelty wears off, difficulties develop or disappointment occurs, they drift away.

The thin soil of their faith has to be deepened and enriched.

This takes time; they need companionship and encouragement.

Some soil is good but infested with thorns; souls contain natural instincts and inherited genes which can produce painful and harmful thorns in thought, word and action.

These have to be controlled.

The Holy Spirit will help us but noise and activity are like thorns blocking his way.

Thorny souls need concentrated prayer to cut back all that stops us hearing God's word and make room for the Holy Spirit.

This takes time and needs perseverance.

Then there's the good soil; souls that are naturally good, so no problem with them.

Many souls are more like fields made up of each type of soil.

So the good news is that there is no need to be discouraged by our problems in living a Christian life in the Catholic Church.

Few of the saints were good souls; most had to struggle with hardness, shallowness and thorns. That's why saints are noted for their *heroic* virtue.

Our all-knowing and all-loving sower God does not expect limited soils to produce unlimited fruit.

However we are not soil so we do have the obligation to accept everything that God offers to make our souls more fertile.

So Jesus says: "Listen!"

Listen to God in every way that he tries to speak to us – prayer, sacraments, reading, compassionate friends and wise guidance.

God knows that difficult soil takes longer to produce fruit.

Let's rejoice that God, like the sower, is patient.

**Rev Geoffrey Carey**