

Reflecting
on the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Archdiocese of
Liverpool

Prepare to be attentive to *The God Who Speaks in this story.*



- Light a candle or tea light if possible.
- Perhaps place a flower from the garden or a plant next to the light.

Let us begin our time of prayer for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Breathe deeply and allow yourself to become still.

Let the music help you to relax. Ask for God's grace and light to fill your heart and your mind as you open to the Word.



*Speak, Lord, I'm listening
Plant your word down deep in me.
Speak, Lord, I'm listening
Please show me the way.*

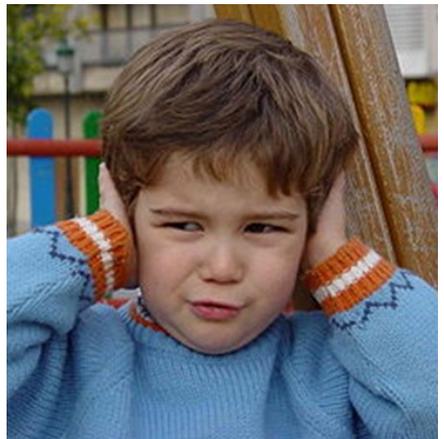
Sometimes my heart is slow to follow you;
Teach me to hear and understand;
And I'm told the things you promise;
And I hope they all come true;
For I know what waits for those who wait;
And put their trust in You.

Sometimes I stumble on my way to you;
Stretch out again, your healing hand;
And I'm told the things you promise;
And I hope they all come true;
For I know what waits for those who wait;
And put their trust in You.



Spend some time just looking at the three images.

- Where is your eye drawn to?
- What feelings are you experiencing?
- What are you noticing?



Pray the Responsorial Psalm for today.



Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.

You care for the earth, give it water,
you fill it with riches.
Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain.

Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.

And thus you provide for the earth;
you drench its furrows;
you level it, soften it with showers;
you bless its growth.

Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.

You crown the year with your goodness.
Abundance flows in your steps,
in the pastures of the wilderness it flows.

Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.

The hills are girded with joy,
the meadows covered with flocks,
the valleys are decked with wheat.
They shout for joy, yes, they sing.

Some seed fell into rich soil and produced its crop.

Now, either read slowly to yourself this short passage from the Gospel according to Matthew or better still, read it aloud, again slowly.

From the Gospel according to Matthew 13:1-9



That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying:

‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But



when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!’

Then the disciples came and asked him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered, ‘To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. The reason I speak to them in parables is that “seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.”’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Spend a few moments allowing some aspect of the Gospel – a word/phrase or image – to touch you more deeply and read this part a second time, aloud if possible.

Now move on to this week's reflection by Kathleen McGhee SND...



We live in a very noisy world. We get so used to noise that we are surprised when we encounter silence. During the lockdown it became quite a talking point. We heard the sound of birdsong! Imagine!

The noise that our ears are subjected to on a daily basis does not, however, mean that we actually listen to what is going on around us. In fact the noisy world does not seem to be a listening world at all. The



feeling of not being heard is a very common experience; we know when we are being ignored, treated with glazed looks, heard but not understood; above all when the evident dismissal of our words makes us feel totally rejected. Equally we know only too well when we are being respectfully heard and the hearer gives themselves to be truly present to me as well as to my words.

So it is with Jesus. He knows that while the crowd around were giving lip service to listening to him, only a few, a very few, were actually present to his word.

In order to make that clear, especially to his disciples, he tells a story – the story of a farmer scattering seed. He describes all the ways in which the seed comes to

nothing because it falls in the wrong soil, and how even the seeds that fall in the very best of rich soil vary in how well they produce their crop.

He is describing, of course, the many ways his teaching is either received or rejected, what happens to his word when it reaches the ears of his listeners. And just as we ourselves are aware of being rejected when we are not listened to, so Jesus knows that the dismissal of his word is the refusal to accept him and the Father who sent him. It is the rejection of “the Word (that) became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Take a few moments to receive and reflect on this poem by Veronica Aaronson.



Hunt out wild flowers,
reach out, not to pick them
but as an offer of intimacy.

Stay open-hearted,
don't put your ear
to the ground to listen

for sap or soil, instead
tune into the words
written between the lines –

visible in the way bluebell,
pink campion, stitchwort
offer up their secrets,

have made themselves
vulnerable against
pale and dark greens.

This is an offering –
last chance to hear
this moment's prayer.

As a result of your reflection, offer some prayers of intercession for the people and situations in our world today that seem to you to be most in need.

Let's begin with the prayer Archbishop Malcolm has asked us to pray at this time and then you may like to include one or more of prayers that follow and/or add your own:



God Our Father,
each person is precious to You.
You are the Giver of life.
Have mercy on us and protect us at this time,
as the coronavirus threatens health and life.
You are an ever-present Helper in time of trouble.
Watch over those who are suffering,
give strength to those who are aiding the sick
and give courage to all in this time of anxiety.
We ask this of you in the name of your Son.
Jesus Christ.
Amen.

We pray for all who serve our world through the gifts of leadership ... may they be deeply committed to listening to the needs of the people they serve during these days of change and uncertainty.

We pray for all who need the service of our foodbanks at this time and all who serve within them ... may they be supported through generous and abundant donations from their local communities.

We pray for all who are close to death ... may they know the deep peace of the Risen Lord.

We pray now in the words Jesus gave us:

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

To end your time of reflection, listen to *I am the Light*.



I am the Light, bringing You out of darkness,
so come, take my light to the world.
I am the Bread you must feed to the hungry,
the Wine that must fill ev'ry heart
Foxes have holes, birds have their nests,
But the Son of Man has no place to rest.
Come, follow Me, be the light of the nations,
Leave your nets and come, follow Me.

I am the Life that must change every life
And the Way that must alter your ways.
I am the truth and my word is the cross
You must take if you want to be free.
Foxes have holes, birds have their nests,
But the Son of Man has no place to rest.
Come, follow Me, be the light of the nations,
Leave your nets and come, follow Me.

I am the Sower, come, work in my vineyard, my field.
Tend my vines, sow the grain.
And should it fall to the ground,
It can only spring up
With new life, hundredfold.
Foxes have holes, birds have their nests,
But the Son of Man has no place to rest.
Come, follow Me, be the light of the nations,
Leave your nets and come, follow Me.

I am the Shepherd come into the sheepfold
To help feed my lambs, feed my sheep.
Bring back the straying
And bind up their wounds, and rejoice
When you've found what was lost.
Foxes have holes, birds have their nests,
But the Son of Man has no place to rest.
Come, follow Me, be the light of the nations,
Leave your nets and come, follow Me.

Acknowledgements

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Poem by Veronica Aaronson from *Nothing about the birds is ordinary this morning* Indigo Dreams, 2019.

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