



SUNDAY LETTER

Series: Spirituality; Fifteenth Sunday of Year A; 12 Jul 2020

Jesus' Parables

By the time of Jesus, parables were already an established method of teaching in Israel. Jesus used parables to illustrate profound truths and, properly understood, they challenged the hearer. It is now over 2000 years since Jesus spoke of 'the sower' who went out to sow the seed of the Kingdom in a world so hostile that he died for proclaiming it. As Christians, we hope that through his Spirit we become part of his harvest.

Endurance in the Face of Opposition

The parable of the sower is as challenging for us today as it was for the audience of Jesus' time. It stresses our responsibility to cultivate the 'fruitful ground' of our hearts (the place where the word of God will grow). It tells us to be open to God's dream within us ... instead of letting ourselves become cynical and pessimistic. There will always be hostility to truth; however, that is the very place where God's grace is most effective.

And Optimistic God

The image of God presented by Jesus in the *Parable of the Sower* is of a God of abundant patience and optimism. Because we are God's creation, we listen, and we become receptive, fertile ground. Sr Stan Kennedy puts it beautifully in her poem *The Now of God*:

*A dance between what is
and what could be
A dance with providence
The impossible becoming possible.*

How can we work with this optimistic, gracious, patient, God to create an environment where the dream of God's kingdom becomes a reality in our world?

The silence that Steiner spoke about is not a hostile silence. This is the silence where I listen for God's word; it is a silence receptive to God dreaming his kingdom within me. ■

Summary

The Parable of the Sower presents a God of abundant patience and optimism.

Christians are open to God's dream within us.

Question

What kind of presence, what kind of God, what kind of power?

Prayer

Lord, I ask you to make me part of your harvest.



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Sat 11 Jul Benedict, patron of Europe
: Sun 12 Jul Ordinary 15 : Mon 13 Jul Henry : Tue 14 Jul Camillus : Wed 15 Jul Bonaventure : Thu 16 Jul Our Lady of Mount Carmel : Fri 17 Jul Weekday : Sat 18 Jul Weekday : Sun 19 Jul Ordinary 16.



The late George Steiner, a great writer, once asked:

"How much of God's power lies in God's silence?"

Steiner went on to explain that ...

"light, music, silence reaching beyond language, are proof enough of a transcendent presence in the fabric of the world."

But my question is: What kind of presence, what kind of God, and what kind of power?

The Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah the prophet created an image of a powerful God who sends his Word out into a hostile world. That power was sent to transform whatever was hostile, and so to offer salvation to the world.

The Psalmist

Psalm 6 sings of an extravagant God who cares for creation:

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

(Psalm 6)

Is the light that George Steiner spoke about really God's truth guiding us in a hostile world? Can we still hear the music of the Psalmist – written one thousand years before Christ – reminding us of God's abundant care for creation? Environmentalists have heard it; and believers see it as human cooperation with God's generosity in caring for the earth.