

HOMILY 15TH Sunday Ordinary Time

July 12, 2026

Today in the Gospel reading we hear the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. I wanted to give you a visual of what this looked like at the time Jesus delivered this parable. This is the Bay of Parables in the Sea of Galilee. [picture from land, picture of the grounds, picture from the sea, audio from the sea]. I used to wonder how Jesus could deliver these parables in a time before microphones. This last recording was recorded with someone standing on the water and it was recorded from where the people in the picture were standing. The acoustics were such that about 7,000 could gather here and the speaker could be heard. A parable is a form of analogy that seeks to illuminate one reality by appealing to something better known. In this case comparing living the Gospels with the sowing of seed. And as you can see from the picture, all the types of ground were there, the path, the rocky ground, the thorns and the rich soil were right there. The people did not have to use their imaginations.

Now I am guessing that if I went around the church and asked you individually which type of soil you are, most of you would say you are the rich soil that produces much fruit, and I would agree with you. Most of you come to Mass regularly, you listen to the scripture when you are here, you listen to the homily. Most of you pray during the week and try to live your faith. That sounds like the rich soil that bears much fruit. You are good people. I want you to look at the parable in a little different way. I want you to look at your life like the pictures of the Bay of Parables. Look at your life as containing all kinds of soil, different soil in different areas of your life.

Now at that time, one way of sowing seed was just to scatter it all over and then see what would grow. Maybe you are sowing your seeds as acts of kindness all over, but if you sow an act of kindness, you expect some appreciation in return. If you do not show your appreciation, I am stopping the acts of kindness. Whoo! There is a big boulder that needs to be removed. Or maybe you come to Mass and when the reader starts you think, “I have heard this a half a dozen times. I do not need to pay attention to that.” The seed is kind of falling on the path. Or maybe we know what God is calling us to do, but

sometimes you just have to go for the cash, or sometimes you just need to escape for a while with drugs or alcohol or go scrolling on the internet. Maybe these are some of the thorns or weeds we need to get rid of.

Look at the different areas of your life. Look at your immediate family. I see young families where parents will do absolutely anything for their children. This is fertile ground and bears much fruit. Our young people are our present and future. How about the more extended family. Maybe you have parents or aunts and uncles that need to be taken care of. Maybe you do some things for them but think they do not appreciate me enough. Maybe they just expect me to take care of them. Maybe there are some boulders we need to get rid of. Maybe we need to understand that they are losing their independence and that is hard for them. Maybe they need to embrace where they are at and graciously ask for and accept the help and be grateful for the help. Maybe your aging relatives have some boulders they need to get rid of as well. And what about your work life. What are you willing to do for the money? After all, that is why you are working. Maybe there are some thorns there. And what about your postings on social media. I was talking with a gay man in his late 30's who told me that he recently came out to his family and close friends. He said they were all very loving and supportive of him. He said that it was such a relief not to have to hide who he is from the people he loves and who love him. It was a good experience until someone posted something about him on social media. That is when all the negativity and hatred started. He said it is terrible what people posted about him, people that hardly even know him. He said, "what people who hardly know me post about me should not bother me, but it does. I do not feel safe." We need to be very careful about what we are posting on social media. Are we posting thorns?

So, look at the different areas of your life. Where is there rich ground that produces much fruit? Where are there some boulders or thorns or weeds that you need to get rid of?