

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

By: Fr. Greg Ames

Maybe it is because it is an ancient language. Maybe it is because it was the official language for years of an oppressive and closed regime. With new freedom in the country, and confronting modern culture, the Russian language is facing challenge. There are purists who say leave the language alone, but there are many others who don't want reform; they just want some order to the language. They maintain that the rules of grammar are confusing and messy and unnecessarily cause difficulties. They cite that admission to top universities can still turn on issues like the proper spelling of words for which no accepted spelling exists. For those who want change it is about more than good grammar; they want people to feel united in their language. A reporter observed: *Many simply believe society would be better educated and life a trifle easier if everyone agreed on how the language should be spoken and pronounced.*

My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will . . .

The words of Scripture are ancient, and may seem to be confusing and out of date. It is not the words or the grammar, or even images that seem foreign that matter. It is the meaning of those words, the power they convey and the message they call us to live. That is what unites us not only to God, but to one another. Today we heard one of the most famous parables of Jesus. Even if his disciples did not understand it at first, we—all these centuries later—understand what he meant. It's living it that is hard. **THE SOWER, THE SEED, THE SOIL**

THE SOWER The sower may not be an image most folks in suburban NJ relate to; but you

have big lawns; you've had to throw a few seeds down. And therein is the point of a sower. You don't plant grass see by seed; nor is your concern with only one part of the lawn. You look at the whole lawn; you throw it wherever it might be needed. God as the sower lavishly spreads love. This is the powerful image of Isaiah: God's love does not know our narrow and petty boundaries. It goes wherever love is needed.

THE SEED Isaiah imagined God's word like rain or snow. Jesus imagined it like seed. They are symbolic ways of saying God's word gives life. Sometimes we think all we have to do is open the Bible and we will find all the answers. Usually we are challenged by more questions. The life of faith is taking God's word and cultivating it; letting it take root in our hearts. For the followers of Jesus, it's about forgiveness; mercy; peace, justice; love. What might happen if you took those seeds and built not your life, but each day on them.

THE SOIL OF YOUR LIFE Faith is not magic; it is not a quick word, prescription, answer. That is what frustrates people in difficult time when challenging time come and there isn't one word that makes it all better. Paul understood that; when he says he considers the present suffers as nothing compared with future glory, it was his way of saying, you have to see the big picture. Faith is an everyday opening of the heart; an everyday willingness to listen; an everyday admission this will take time. The soil of our daily life has to be worked everyday: prayer, service, Eucharist, scripture, silence.

So just for this week: what does your soil need? When the sower comes there to sow the seed, what word is being spoken to you?

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Isaiah 55:10-11

Romans 8: 18-23

Matthew 13: 1-23

July 16, 2017

「因為凡有的，還要給他，使他富足；
但是沒有明的，連他所有的，也要由他奪去。」

瑪(13:12)

盧嘉勒

耶穌的這句話如此重要，以致在瑪竇福音中出現了兩次(瑪 13:12; 25:29)。它很清楚的反映出天主的計劃與我們有所不同。祂的運算方式亦經常與我們有差別，就例如祂把同樣的工資賞給了最後一個時辰來的工人，令他們與第一個時辰來的工人獲得同等待遇(瑪 20:1-16)。

耶穌說這句話時，正在回答門徒為什麼祂要用比喻隱晦地對群眾講話，但對他們卻清楚地說明一切。耶穌給自己的門徒揭示全部的真理和真光，正是因為他們跟隨了祂；耶穌已成為他們的一切。門徒以開放的心，完全準備好去迎接耶穌；他們的內心已擁有耶穌，所以耶穌也把自己完全的賜給他們。

為要了解耶穌這種行事的方式，我們可以參考路加福音另一句相似的話：「你們給，也就給你們；並且還要用好的，連按帶搖，以致外溢的升斗，倒在你們的懷裏。」(路 6:38) 這兩句聖言顯示出在耶穌的邏輯中，「有」(「凡有的，還要給他」)等於「給」(「你們給，也就給你們」)的意思。

我相信你們也曾體驗過這端福音的真理。當你去幫助病人、安慰憂愁的人、或陪伴孤獨的人，事後，你不也曾感受過一份不知從何而來的喜樂與平安嗎？這正是愛的邏輯。我們越是施予的多，我們越變得富有。

因此，我們可以用以下方式去解讀這個月的生活聖言：為那些心中有愛，並在愛內生活的人，天主越是把愛的能力賞賜給他們，令他們愛得更多，並使他們的愛達致滿全，以致他們能變得像天主一樣，而天主本身就是愛。

「因為凡有的，還要給他，使他富足；但是沒有明的，連他所有的，也要由他奪去。」

的確，愛使我們存立，由於我們愛，所以我們存在。如果我們不去愛，每次我們沒有愛過的時候，我們就一無所是，我們就不算存在了。(這就是「連他所有的，也要由他奪去」的意思)。

所以我們務必要愛，要毫無保留地去愛。只有這樣天主才會把自己給予我們；在祂內，我們將獲得滿全的恩賜。

讓我們具體地向我們周圍的人有所付出，同時確信這樣做就等如向天主施予。讓我們不斷的施予；施予一個微笑、一點諒解、一份寬恕。讓我們去聆聽；讓我們付出我們的才智，和隨時願意服務的精神；讓我們付出我們的時間、我們的才能、我們的構思、我們的活動；讓我們與他人分享自己的經驗、自己的能力及財物，使財富不致積聚，卻把一切流通起來。我們的施予能把天主的手張開，並在祂上智的眷顧下，令我們獲得更豐厚的賞賜，使我們能再次及大量地施予，並因而獲得更多，這樣便能滿足許多人無盡的需求。

「因為凡有的，還要給他，使他富足；但是沒有明的，連他所有的，也要由他奪去。」

耶穌給我們最大的禮物就是祂自己，祂願意時常臨在我們中間，而這就是滿全的生命，就是祂要給我們滿溢的富足。當耶穌的門徒團結一致地跟隨祂時，祂便將祂自己賜給他們。因此，這句生活聖言提醒我們靈修的共融層面。因此我們可以這樣解讀：那些生活在互愛和合一的人，在他們的中間將會有耶穌自己的親臨。這樣我們將會獲得更多。因為凡有的，即是在愛內生活的人，在今世會獲得百倍的賞報，並在永生得到豐厚的獎賞：天堂；而這份獎賞將是豐盈的。凡是沒有明的，就是那些得不到百倍賞報的人，他們既然沒有在愛內生活，所以將來他們也不會享有世上曾擁有的財富(包括親人、財物)，因為在地獄裡只有苦楚。故此，讓我們去愛吧！讓我們愛所有的人；直到對方也曉得以愛回應我們，因而達至互愛的地步，這樣我們將會獲得滿全的生命。