

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY



First Reading † Isaiah 55:10-11

The rain makes the earth fruitful.

Thus says the Lord:

‘As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.’

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial † Psalm 64:10-14

The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

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

The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

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

The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

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

The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

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

The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

Second Reading † Romans 8:18-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

All creation is waiting for the revelation of the children of God.

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons.

It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God.

From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower;
all who come to him will live for ever.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel [longer form] † Matthew 13:1-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

A sower went out to sow.

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables.

He said,

‘Imagine a sower going out to sow.
As he sowed, some seeds fell on the edge of the path,
and the birds came and ate them up.

‘Others fell on patches of rock
where they found little soil
and sprang up straight away,
because there was no depth of earth;
but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and,
not having any roots, they withered away.

‘Others fell among thorns,
and the thorns grew up and choked them.

‘Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop,
some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

‘Listen, anyone who has ears!’

The disciples went up to Jesus and asked,

‘Why do you talk to the crowds in parables?’

‘Because’ he replied,
‘the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you,
but they are not revealed to them.

‘For anyone who has will be given more,
and he will have more than enough;
but from anyone who has not,
even what he has will be taken away.

'The reason I talk to them in parables
is that they look without seeing
and listen without hearing or understanding.
So in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled:

'You will listen and listen again, but not understand,
see and see again, but not perceive.
For the heart of this nation has grown coarse,
their ears are dull of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes,
for fear they shall see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and be converted
and be healed by me.

'But happy are your eyes because they see,
your ears because they hear!

'I tell you solemnly,
many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see,
and never saw it;
to hear what you hear, and never heard it.'

'You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower.
When anyone hears the word of the kingdom
without understanding,
the evil one comes and carries off
what was sown in his heart;
this is the man who received the seed
on the edge of the path.

'The one who received it on patches of rock
is the man who hears the word
and welcomes it at once with joy.

'But he has no root in him, he does not last;
let some trial come,
or some persecution on account of the word,
and he falls away at once.

'The one who received the seed on thorns
is the man who hears the word,
but the worries of this world
and the lure of riches
choke the word and so he produces nothing.

'And the one who received the seed in rich soil
is the man who hears the word and understands it;
he is the one who yields a harvest
and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty.'

The Gospel of the Lord.