

# Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time [a]

July 13, 2008

## Readings

Isaiah 55:10-11

Romans 8:18-23

Matthew 13:1-23 or 13:1-9

## Calendar

July 11-13: Convention for the Common Good in Philadelphia [www.commongoodconvention.org](http://www.commongoodconvention.org)

July 14: Memorial of Blessed Kateri Tekawitha

The first Native American to be declared Blessed; Patroness of ecology and the environment

## Quotes

The hungry nations of the world cry out to the peoples blessed with abundance. And the Church, cut to the quick by this cry, asks each and every person to hear his or her brother's and sister's plea and answer it lovingly.

*Paul VI, Populorum Progressio*

"If there is hunger anywhere in the world, then our celebration of the Eucharist is somehow incomplete everywhere in the world."

*Pedro Arrupe SJ*

We have a lot of work to do. Every time we reach out and assuage someone's hunger, and do that in memory of Jesus, a sense of Eucharist will bring to consciousness the Spirit and the real presence of Jesus - in us, through us, among us. That Spirit alone is capable of transforming us and the world.

*Miriam Therese Winter, MMS*

... we have been given hope, trustworthy hope ....

*Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi*

"Hence, as Leo XIII so wisely taught in *Rerum Novarum*: 'whoever has received from the divine bounty a large share of temporal blessings, whether they be external and corporeal, or gifts of the mind, has received them for the purpose of using them for the perfecting of his own nature, and, at the same time, that he may employ them, as the steward of God's Providence, for the benefit of others.' He that hath a talent,' says St. Gregory the Great, 'let him see that he hide it not; he that hath abundance, let him quicken himself to mercy and generosity; he that hath art and skill, let him do his best to share the use and the utility thereof with his neighbor.'"

*John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, 119*

## Thoughts for your consideration

Today's readings remind us of the possibilities that can happen as God's gifts are used well. Abundance and fruitfulness are possible. Good things are possible. Hunger and injustice can come to an end.

Isaiah says that the rain and snow will not return to God until they have watered the earth and made it fertile and fruitful. The parable of Jesus affirms that a 30 or 60 or 100 fold increase is possible. To use the image of the second reading, there is a purpose to the groaning and struggling of life. It all leads to something good.

We live in a world that has abundant resources. The world can provide food and shelter for everyone. However, some people are very rich and some are very poor. Some people share in the abundance and some people have almost nothing. Some people live on a dollar a day and some people have millions of dollars to spend. Some people eat very well and some have trouble eating once a day. Some people have electricity and some have none. Some people have two or more homes. Some people are homeless.

In a world of great possibilities, a just distribution of God's gifts is the challenge. God invites us to a responsible sharing of the abundance and a renewal of structures that will give everyone a just opportunity to share in the riches of the world.

In the gospel parable today the image of the sower is that of one who generously, almost recklessly scatters seeds everywhere. Grace is abundant. The goodness of God is abundant. God's word is abundant. The possibilities for the world and its people are numerous and wonderful. The challenge is to take advantage of this abundance. Some close their eyes or ears or hearts and do not respond to the word. Choked by wealth and anxiety, we can close ourselves to the reality of the poor and marginalized of our world. Choked by the structures and institutions of our world, we can feel paralyzed. The word today reminds us that something more is possible.

## Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

What are the things in your life that choke off the effectiveness of the word of God?

What are the things in our society that choke off the effectiveness of the word of God?

## Actions - Links

The **Group of Eight (G8)** is an international forum for the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The G8 meets this month in Japan from July 7 to 9. ONE is nonpartisan group that seeks to fight against extreme poverty. Info about the summit and what they are doing or not doing to address poverty can be found at <http://www.one.org/>.

*"2008 is a landmark year in the fight against poverty and disease. The world is halfway to 2015 when the Millennium Goals must be achieved, but Africa is perilously off track. 2008 is also the halfway point between 2005 and 2010 when many G8 promises to Africa must be met such as the commitment to provide an additional \$25 billion in effective aid for Africa. The G8 are dangerously behind on these landmark commitments."*

For information about the UN Millenniums Development goals for 2015, so to

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>. One can monitor the goals at <http://www.mdgmonitor.org/>

## **“Crazy Facts”**

The United Nations estimates that “824 million people suffer from chronic hunger in the developing world – a state when they lack the required food to meet their daily needs.”

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*Response: May God's justice rain down on the earth.*

For those living in extreme poverty, we pray....

For those who enjoy extreme wealth and prosperity, we pray....

For those who do not have enough to eat this day, we pray....

For those who do not have employment, we pray....

For those who do not have their own land to farm, we pray....

For children who do not have access to education, we pray....

For older people who do not have the care they need to live with dignity, we pray....

## **Prayer - Meditation**

All-nourishing God, your children cry for help  
Against the violence of our world:  
Where children starve for bread and feed on weapons;  
Starve for vision and feed on drugs;  
Starve for love and feed on videos;  
Starve for peace and die murdered in our streets.  
Creator God, timeless preserver of resources,  
Forgive us for the gifts that we have wasted.  
Renew for us what seems beyond redemption;  
Call order and beauty to emerge again from chaos.  
Convert our destructive power into creative service;  
Help us to heal the woundedness of our world.

Liberating God, release us from the demons of violence.  
Free us today from the disguised demon of deterrence  
That puts guns by our pillows and missiles in our skies.

Free us from all demons that blind and blunt our spirits;  
Cleanse us from all justifications for violence and war;  
Open our narrowed hearts to the suffering and the poor.

Abiding God, loving renewer of the human spirit,  
Unfold our violent fists into peaceful hands:  
Stretch our sense of family to include our neighbors;  
Stretch our senses of neighbor to include our enemies;  
Until our response to you finally respects and embraces  
All creation as precious sacraments of your presence.

Hear the prayer of your starving children. Amen.

*Prayer for a New Society, (c) Pax Christi USA, 1995*

