

The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit.

- Matthew 13

Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time: July 22 - 28, 2012

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Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

On the **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we read from the **Book of the Prophet Jeremiah** that God himself will shepherd his people and that a descendant of David will rule with wisdom and justice. **Mark's Gospel** paints a picture of Jesus trying to gather together his disciples for a rest but the people kept coming to them: "his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."

Wednesday is the **Feast of Saint James, apostle**, with its own special readings. Thursday is the **Memorial of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne**, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The first readings this week are from the **Book of the Prophet Micah**. Later in the week we move to readings from the **Book of the Prophet Jeremiah**, which will continue next week and into the week afterwards.

We continue to read from **Matthew's Gospel** this week. The scribes and Pharisee ask Jesus for a sign to prove his credentials. He says that the only sign will be his death and resurrection. Jesus says to all who follow him: "Here are my mother and my brothers." He tells his disciples the parable of the sower. When asked why he speaks in parables Jesus answers that those who are simple and those with open hearts will hear and understand. Then Jesus explains the parable and the importance of rich soil. Saturday is another "sower" parable with an enemy

Daily Prayer This Week

It is helpful be reminded by Jesus this week that to be his disciple is not about comparing ourselves with each other. It is not about a competition to be greater than another. It is about being servants of each other and being like him, who came to give his life away. As we pray this week, in the background of our daily lives, we can reflect upon all the relationships in our lives and ask for the grace to come to know the needs of each person in my life and for the grace to be servant as Jesus is servant.

The parable of the sower can be a wonderful source of reflection this week. We can do it in a variety of ways, but it might be helpful to just take one kind of soil to reflect on each day. Each day we can begin -- as we first get out of bed, in the shower, while dressing, eating, driving, walking from one place to another, shopping -- by asking for the grace to understand how parts of me are like this soil.

Seed sown on the hard path: I can ask to know how the Word is simply stolen away from my heart. What is hard-hearted in me? What hardens me? How am I not open? What saps my spirits, my hope, my faith?

Seed sown on rocky ground: I can ask to know how I sometimes initially receive the Word readily, even with joy, but my lack of deep roots leads to my losing heart when troubles come. When do I lose courage? How do I believe the Word but fail to pay to price for living it? How can I develop deeper roots?

Seed sown among thorns: I can ask for the grace to know how I initially welcome the Word, but then let anxieties and the lure of riches choke the Word so it can't bear fruit. What kind of worldly

planting weeds in a field. “Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning but gather the wheat into my barn.””

The **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** begins five weeks of Sunday reflections on Chapter 6 of **John's Gospel** on Jesus as the **Bread of Life**. This Sunday is the miracle of the five barley loaves and two fishes. “Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted.”

anxieties trouble me? What kind of attractions, possessions, addictions affect my freedom and peace? What grace in me isn't bearing fruit? How can I be freer, live more simply, with more surrender?

Seed sown on rich soil. I can ask for the grace to hear the Word and understand it and to bear much fruit. What will help me, prepare me to be more receptive? What environment, activities, service will help?

Each night, we can give thanks for these reflections that help us examine our daily live and grow in love, in freedom and in fruitfulness.

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