



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Father Mike Kuse
July 16, 2017 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalm 65:10-14

Reading II Romans 8:18-23

Gospel Mathew 13:1-23

Homily

What kind of soil are you? Are you rich and fertile? Or is your life rotten? Or are you so caught up in everything else that the word of God takes the back seat? Or are you just playing the game? Jesus really hits home with this long Gospel. Next Sunday the Gospel is going to follow with another important message. But today God is putting words into our heart about our faith and asks, "I want to know if you are going to do something with your faith. If not, it's not going to make any difference." And he is asking us every single day to come and to stretch ourselves and to be able to see life in a different way.

I did not grow up on the farm. I didn't even understand the cycles of planting and harvesting. When I went to my first parish it was all farmland where the church was located. And so I said to this couple, "I just do not understand farming. All I do is receive the results of it." The farmer said, "I'll tell you what. When it comes time for a harvest, I'll give you a call and you come out to the house and we'll spend the day."

The land where I lived at the time was very rich land. That was going back some thirty years ago and land was selling for \$10,000 an acre. So he called me, I went to his farm and got into the combine and thought, "Wow. This is really classy." I had no idea farming was this much fun. We went up and down the rows and we had a chance to talk and when it came time for lunch, his wife came out with a basket lunch and we sat out in the field and ate lunch, and then we brought the crop in until evening. I thought, "Wow. What a lesson to learn. All I want to do is go to the store and buy food." That rich soil produced acre after acre of wheat. And it didn't just happen. This couple nurtured the land, year in and year out. The farmer who allowed me to visit his farm and ride on the combine died just a couple of months ago.

But he taught me something about this Gospel and it was, when God wants to bless you — you have to have rich soil, and rich soil means, "I am just open. OK, God, pour it on. I don't know what you are asking of me. Just lay it on me and give me the grace to see what it is all about. And let it make a difference in my life."

So I ask you this morning: What experience have you had in life when you finally realize that the only way to grow in faith is just to surrender to God? And it is going to be

something very simple that will change your life. It is not good enough to just come in here on Sunday morning. "Oh yeah. We came in for 8 o'clock Mass and then went out and had breakfast." Well, what did you pick up while you were here? Because everybody here is rich soil, and God is planting a seed in us and is saying, "That seed is going to go no where unless you reach out and bless each other with that seed of faith." It is what we call today stewardship and discipleship. But when we think, "It is all about me. I expect you all to do things for me, but I do not intend to do anything in return." Then Jesus says, "No. That is just rocky soil. You don't get it. You have to really let me come into your life, and when I do — you are going to see how much you will produce."

The other evening we were having a meeting on the environment of the world in which we live, and while we were in the Gathering Area of the church a young woman came in the door with a young child and wanted to know if we would give her some money because she had to drive 15 miles to home. The entire group got up and gave her money. She did very well. You never know if you were doing the right thing. Until last night as I was getting ready for Mass, someone came to me and said there was a lady here and she needs some money. I turned around and walked to the door and it was the same young woman. I said to her, "You were here two weeks ago, remember. I remember you, and we opened our coffers to help you. You lied to us so I want you to leave, and don't come back."

We are here to help those who want to be helped and have the rich soil, and who want to grow in faith and make a difference. But don't take advantage of anyone. We all have different soils at different times. God is saying, "If you listen to what I say, you are going to have the right answer and the right response every moment of your life."

So this week, may we respond to each other. May we make a difference in the world. And when Jesus says, "Wow. I bless you. You are the rich soil," you are not just listening and walking away. You are taking it inside and you are making a difference and you want to respond.

That young woman needs to know you cannot milk the system. She needs to open her life and welcome that word of God and once she does, her life will change. So the question is, will our life change this week? Will you and I be able to say, "God has blessed me and touched me and I just need to return thanks by doing something for someone else."

*Monsignor Michael Kuse is Pastor Emeritus at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Quincy, IL.
(TASCAM DR 40 file 0046)*