

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?" <sup>14</sup> The farmer sows the word. <sup>15</sup> Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. <sup>16</sup> Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>18</sup> Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; <sup>19</sup> but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>20</sup> Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

A successful planting leading to a bountiful harvest depends upon the interaction of the seed and the soil. Until the seed is sown, it is dormant and no growth is possible. Once it comes in contact with the soil and is taken into the soil, the process of germination begins. In the parable, therefore, the human being who has not come into contact with the word is soil. But once the person encounters the word he is no longer only soil, but seed and soil. The important point of this parable is the matter of how deep the seed is incorporated into the soil; the matter of true receptivity. In the world there are those who refuse to receive the word, those who superficially acknowledge the word, those who take in the word along with a lot of other worldly noise, and there are those who take the word to heart and make it the guiding principle of their lives. The latter group is made up of those through whom the kingdom will spread and God will be glorified. They will not only produce fruit, but through that fruit additional seed will be distributed in the world.

Good soil is dirt that envelopes the seed, protects the seed and nurtures the seed. We function as good soil when we study God's word daily, pray about what we read, consult the Church community for clarification and guidance, and commit to living according to God's word.

**Open my heart and mind, Lord, to receive your word. Inspire me through your Holy Spirit to allow the word to be buried deep within me; at the very center of my being. Guide me as I nurture your word. Create in me a desire to let nothing push it toward the surface or crowd it out of my life. Re-image me according to your word that I might produce fruit for your kingdom. Amen.**