

**Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 13: 1-9.**

On that day, Jesus went out of the house and sat down by the sea. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd stood along the shore. And he spoke to them at length in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

Matthew 13:1-9.**Introductory Prayer:**

Lord, my prayer will "work" only if I have humility in your presence. So I am approaching you with meekness and humility of heart. I have an infinite need for you and your grace. Thinking about this helps me grow in humility. I trust in you and your grace. Thank you for the unfathomable gift of your love.

Petition:

Lord, may I always respond to your grace in my heart with fervor and active love.

1. Tears of a Sower:

Imagine Jesus preaching to the crowds, hoping for a positive response, but instead witnessing many people turning a deaf ear to his message of salvation. One day he is thinking about this as he watches a farmer sowing seed. He sees birds come immediately and take some away. He sees previously sown seed scorched by the sun. He sees some sprouts strangled by weeds. He then remembers the faces and perhaps even the names of people who heard his message, but who chose not to respond or whose response was short-lived. We are reminded of another Gospel passage: "As he drew near Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying 'If this day you only knew what makes for peace -- but now it is hidden from your eyes'" (Luke 19:41).

2. Rebellion or Rest:

The admonition to heed the word of God is frequent in Scripture. In the Book of Hebrews the author warns us to "harden not your hearts as at the rebellion in the day of testing in the desert." The people of Israel responded in this unfortunate way after the exodus from Egypt. "They have always been of erring heart, and they do not know my ways. As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter into my rest'" (Cf. Hebrews 3: 7-11). This helps us foster a healthy fear of the Lord, encouraging us to work hard to conquer all hardness of heart and remain close to Christ so as to enter into his rest.

3. Fruits of Virtue:

"But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty-fold." The fruit that Our Lord wishes us to produce are virtues inspired by faith, hope and love. If we are growing in virtue each day in imitation of Christ and for love of him, we can be sure we are heeding his voice and are pleasing in his eyes. The greatest of all virtues is charity, a practical and effective love for our neighbor. We can contemplate the lives of the saints to see how these fruits are played out in a way truly pleasing to Christ. Conversation with Christ: Lord, you know how easy it is for me to allow mediocrity to slip into my life. The cares and worries of life often push you and your kingdom to a secondary plane. Grant me the habit of carving out time for you in prayer each day, and carving out space for you in my life and the lives of those under my care.

Resolution:

I will renew my effort with whatever prayer commitment I have allowed to waver or falter the most.