



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Matthew 13:18-23.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Hear the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the Kingdom without understanding it, and the Evil One comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. When some tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, he immediately falls away. 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. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I believe in your Incarnation. You became flesh for love of us. You were not forced to leave the bliss and glory of heaven. You chose to leave in order to save us. I believe in you. I hope in you. I love you. You took the first step of love toward me. I want to respond in kind.

Petition:

Grant me the grace to follow you with conviction and willpower.

1. Sheltering the Word in My Heart:

Our Lord often speaks of the enemy of God, the devil, as a real being, who has real influence over our lives. When we hear the Word of God, good intentions grow within us. The Evil One attempts to "steal" these intentions away from our heart. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that the devil and demons made a radical and irrevocable free choice to reject God and his reign (no. 392). The devil tries to uproot our good resolutions with the same goal in mind. We must make a firm commitment to allow God's word to take root and grow in our lives.

2. Convictions over Emotions:

The seed sown on rocky ground represents those who receive the word with joy at first, in other words, those easily governed by emotions and sentiments. When they feel joy, they respond to God positively. When they receive comforts from Christ, they are ready to follow him. But when their moods are bad or gloomy, they leave aside their previous

resolutions and abandon the Lord for the wide and spacious road of ease and comforts. They are not seeking Christ but rather their own consolation. Above all they want warm, cozy feelings. Christ shows us the way of true loyalty and love by his crucifixion and death on the cross for love of his Father and souls.

3. Oxygen for the Soul:

One of the saddest categories of people in the Parable of the Sower are those who receive the word but allow “worldly anxiety and the lure of riches” to “choke the word” so that it “bears no fruit” in their lives. Materialism is an all-pervasive temptation in our world today. The only way to conquer this assault on our faith is to make the firm resolution to make time for God. We must make the proactive decision to insert moments for him in our day. Prayer, the sacraments (Mass, confession), spiritual reading and the Rosary are examples of ways to do this.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord Jesus, in my mind you are my first priority. In reality, though, I allow other priorities to topple your rightful position in my life. I allow my feelings to govern my actions instead of my faith and convictions. Strengthen my resolve to make you the True King of my heart in my concrete choices and decisions.

Resolution:

I will go over my daily and weekly schedule and, if necessary, make more quality time for the Lord.