

‘SOWING THE SEED IN LAY MINISTRY’ – HOMILY - 16 JULY 2017

### CARDINAL FARRELL – INTERVIEW

Cardinal Farrell from the Vatican recently gave an interview in the magazine ‘America’ - [‘Time to implement Vatican II’s teaching on the laity’](#)

He is Prefect of the [Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life](#).

He speaks about **implementing lay ministries now** within a **cultural change in the church**.

- *“This is a moment in the life of the church where we can really try to implement what the Second Vatican Council already spoke about, which is the role of the laity in the church.”*
- *“There was some misunderstanding and confusion around this. In the past, we have spent so much time fighting among ourselves. I think we have lost an awful lot of ground and an awful lot of time by infighting, but I think now is the right time.”*
- *“The laity have a vocation to fulfill in the church, and I am a firm believer that the future of the church depends on them.”*
- *“But now there has to be a change of mentality and ability to adapt to the reality of the pastoral life of the church today.”*
- *“A change of culture is necessary, regarding what we do and how we do it.”*
- *“We need to be, as Pope Francis says, a church that goes out, a missionary church.”*

### IN THIS TIME OF CHANGE, WHAT CAN TODAY’S GOSPEL REVEAL TO US?

Are local clergy or diocesan structures receptive and supportive **to the many lay ministries being called forth by the Holy Spirit?**

Or shallow in response and choked by the sin of clericalism?

Are we mission (as a verb)? Or just missionary at times when it suits us?

How do we use language as we mission?

What image does Jesus provide to help us reflect, and open up to the changes of the Holy Spirit?

### WITH JESUS THE SOWER, THE SEED HAS FOUND DEEP SOIL IN MANY LANGUAGES AND CULTURES.

We hear Jesus using language that people can understand, and parables from daily life.

Not only farmers can relate to the parable of the sower.

Jesus is by the sea. He gets into a boat, sits and teaches the crowd standing on the beach.

He speaks in parables - possibly in the **Aramaic** language.

And it is recorded in **koine Greek** in the New Testament.

In our **Archdiocese of Brisbane**, the Gospel is proclaimed primarily in English,

And also regularly in several languages, including -

Arabic, Cantonese, Croatian, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Malayalam,

Mandarin, Polish, Samoan, Spanish, Syriac, Vietnamese.

Sometimes also in French, Pidgin, Portuguese, Tagalog, Tetun,

And languages and dialects of Africa, Asia, eastern Europe, the Middle East, Oceania.

One of the parables is **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER** in the Gospel of Matthew 13:1-23,

*“Listen! A sower went out to sow.*

*And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up.*

*Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil,*

*And they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil.*

*But when the sun rose, they were scorched;*

*And since they had no root, they withered away.*

*Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them.*

*Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain,*

*Some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

*Let anyone with ears listen!”*

#### SOME QUESTIONS FOR US TO CONSIDER

##### 1. **RECEPTIVE TO GOD’S WORD**

How receptive are we to God’s Word?

Do we offer a path with no chance to grow in faith?

Do we offer rocky ground with no depth and no root?

Do we offer ground that will choke God’s Word?

Do we offer the depth and the richness of our very selves to God?

##### 2. **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Another way of viewing this –

Does our relationship with God have depth?

Or is only temporary? Has it withered away?

Is it only when everything is easy?

##### 3. **OUR FAITH**

Is our faith a priority?

What can choke our faith?

How do we treasure our faith?

Is our faith fertile?

Is our parish community fertile?

THE PARABLES LEAD TO QUESTIONS THAT PEOPLE ASK.

THE DISCIPLES ASK THE MEANING.

#### JESUS EXPLAINS:

*“Hear then the parable of the sower.*

*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it,*

*The evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart;*

*This is what was sown on the path.*

*As for what was sown on rocky ground,*

*This is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;  
Yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while,  
And when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word,  
That person immediately falls away.*

*As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word,  
But the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields  
nothing.*

*But as for what was sown on good soil,  
This is the one who hears the word and understands it,  
Who indeed bears fruit and yields,  
In one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”*

POPE FRANCIS - ANGELUS ADDRESS 2014

Pope Francis in his Angelus Address July 13, 2014, identified what the fertile soil represents.

*“the seed that fell on fertile soil represents  
those who hear the word, welcome it,  
safeguard it, and understand  
– and it bears fruit.”*

**THIS WEEK, HOW DO WE HEAR GOD’S WORD?**

**THIS WEEK, HOW DO WE WELCOME GOD’S WORD?**

**THIS WEEK, HOW DO WE SAFEGUARD GOD’S WORD?**

**THIS WEEK, HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND GOD’S WORD?**

**THIS WEEK, HOW DOES GOD’S WORD BEAR FRUIT IN US?**

**THIS WEEK, HOW DOES THE DEPTH OF OUR LAY MINISTRIES REFLECT GOD’S WORD IN  
OUR WORLD?**

We pray that we are open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit,

In new ways, in ministry.

We pray that we mission (verb).

We pray that we are continually nourished by God’s Word.

We pray that we witness to God’s Word in our world.

Guided by God’s love for us, let us bear fruit.

Amen.

Fr. Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Sowing the Seed in Lay Ministry – 16 July 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/071617.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook16072017>]

Other References:

Cardinal Farrell: Interview - [‘Time to implement Vatican II’s teaching on the laity’](#)

Cardinal Farrell: Dicastery - <http://bit.ly/DicasteryLayFamilyLife>

Pope Francis: [Angelus Address July 13, 2014](#)