

THE BODY OF CHRIST IS THE ULTIMATE NOURISHMENT FOR OUR HEARTS  
TO CULTIVATE & NURTURE THE SEED OF GOD'S GRACE  
*15th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 16 July 2023*



Frankly speaking, I do not fully understand the meaning of Jesus' parable of the sower.

There are certain elements in the parable that seem to defy logical reasoning.

*For example, how is it that some seeds fell on rocky ground while others fell on fertile soil at the same time?*

It appears careless of the sower to allow seeds to fall where they cannot grow. Jesus often used parables that were difficult to comprehend, even for his disciples. Unlike Buddha, who typically made straightforward teachings to his followers, Jesus used parables to help us understand his ultimate teachings.

Before we can grasp Jesus' message, let's consider the purpose of sowing seeds. All sowers hope for a bountiful harvest and expect to reap a certain quantity of produce. That is why sowers carefully assess the critical conditions necessary for seeds to bear fruit.

Examining the conditions around us is crucial. When buying a house, we evaluate factors such as accessibility to necessary places like shopping centres and the environmental quality of the area. Today, the Word of God encourages us to assess our own conditions for bearing the fruit of the seed given to us by God. We have all received the seed of faith at our baptism. God entrusts us to nurture this seed throughout our lives.

Since we have received the seed of faith, we have been nurturing it according to the sower's expectations. Our hearts have become the soil in which the seed of faith grows.

*But how do we assess the condition of this soil?*

Our hearts are influenced by external factors. They can become a battleground as we fight against the negative forces that try to separate us from God. On the other hand, our hearts thrive when they receive both physical and spiritual nourishment. The warm welcome and support we receive from our community are complementary nutrients for the growth of our faith.

The Spirit of the Lord is now urging us to evaluate the condition of the soil in which we cultivate the seed of faith.

*How is our heart doing it?*

*Does it resemble the solid rock mentioned in the Gospel?*

*Are there any essential elements missing that are necessary for bearing fruit?*

Through the first reading, the Word of God clearly emphasizes the significance of producing fruit from our own soil. Later in this Mass, our Lord will offer us another seed, which is his body.

*Will his body find a favourable environment within our hearts?*

In addition to receiving the seed of faith, I have also been entrusted with the seed of vocation from God. My heart was meant to nurture and cultivate this seed so that God's desired fruit could be presented to me. It was necessary for me to transform my heart into stable and fertile soil. Many followers of Christ have been attentive to the condition of my heart. Our parishioners, in particular, have played a significant role in assessing whether my heart was spiritually rich enough to grow the seed and bear the fruit of my vocation on the 29th of June. There were moments when my heart became like the solid rock mentioned in today's Gospel reading, leaving me perplexed. However, your prayers and friendships acted as spiritual nourishment that softened my heart and facilitated healthy spiritual growth.

Archbishop Coleridge once mentioned the need to draw upon the gifts that God has bestowed not only upon the ordained but upon all members of the Church. Since my ordination, I have been keenly aware of the importance of utilizing all the gifts that God has

given to the Church through the people in it, including yourself, in order for me to fully receive the abundant fruit offered by our Lord. Undoubtedly, your gifts have been a tremendous blessing to me as I continually seek God's mercy and grace.

Brothers and sisters, our divine Sower, God, continuously bestows upon us the seed of His grace, and it is our responsibility to receive this seed into our hearts and nurture it, allowing it to bear the fruit of His grace. As we gather in His house, we come to receive the seed of His grace. However, receiving the seed is not the end; we must also cultivate a plan for it to grow abundantly within us.

*What are the obstacles we need to remove from our hearts?*

Pruning is necessary to create the optimal conditions for the seed to grow. It could be a lack of confidence or feelings of jealousy that hinder the growth of God's grace within us.

*Moreover, what kind of spiritual nutrients do we require from God today?*

Undoubtedly, the Body of Christ will nourish the soil of our hearts.

*How fertile is your heart spiritually?*

Let us humbly partake in the body of Christ to continuously nourish our souls and bear the fruit of God's grace.

Amen.

Father Minje Kim

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/071623.cfm>