

REGATHERING SUNDAY SET FOR NEXT SUNDAY JULY 19
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PENTECOST 6 MEDITATION

JULY 12, 2020

Dear Friends,

One of my most favorite theologians, Walter Bruggemann uses the phrase “crisis of barrenness” during lectures and in writings to describe the human condition. We think that we have everything at our fingertips, everything ready for orderly life, family career, retirement, aging with dignity, and even dying well.

And then, along comes a health emergency that has infected our Mother Earth and I think we can all agree that our somewhat orderly lives have been turned into alarming uncertain ones. All our confident and strident strategies of prosperity, good health and resources were silenced by the statistics around of COVID-19.

This is a time in our lives when we need to unclutter our lives from the litter and glitter and haste and waste that preoccupied us at the beginning of March before we shuttered our lives. One thing has not changed and that is that we still walk along in deep spiritual hunger and in search of some holiness and faith in God.

Christ need not be crowded out by the sheer busyness of our lives and the multitude of connections we attempt to foster. The wide sowing of seeds continues in real time as God’s grace. I grow, if at all, where Jesus case me; and I discover once again my total dependence on God’s mercy. For God is patient. God is king, and will tend even to the plants that sprout among the cobblestones or at the edge of the ditch.

That’s a miracle and don’t we count ourselves blessed to know so wasteful and inefficient a Creator!

Creator God, unceasingly at work in the field of humanity sowing the good seed and awaiting its yield, let your Spirit move in power over us to transform our hearts into the good soil you seek. Then may your word bear fruit a hundredfold in our deeds of justice and peace, and thus reveal to a world that eagerly awaits its liberation the blessed hope and glorious freedom of your reign. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

From Prayers for Sunday and Seasons, Year A, Peter J. Scagnelli, LTP, 1992.

Faithfully, Beverly+

PENTECOST 6 PATHWAYS

The Lessons: Isaiah 55:10-13; Psalm 65: 9-14; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

The Collect

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Gardens and Fields of God's World

"This is not about what good soil we are, and how well we understand the divine mysteries. This is about what God is doing in staggering numbers."
Anna Carter Florence, *Lectionary Homiletics*

Certainly, people in Jesus time were more connected with their food sources and where their food comes from. Unlike us today, most of them would have had small gardens. So, it is easy to understand his teaching. The sowers sows the seed this is the good news. The ground is us. We can be fruitful or not. We can be like the hard ground, the rocks, or the thorns.

We can let birds come and gather it up. These are hard times and much can happen. Here is what Jesus says 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.” Does this not refer to a disciple who does not give up the spiritual quest for a deeper connection to God and seek to follow.

In this way the human being who was created to be God's partner in the garden, tending and walking with God in the end of the day is restored. The disciple returns to the work we were originally created to undertake. We are to be, like Jesus, sowers of the seeds of the kingdom of God. We are to sow with abandonment. We are to sow in all kinds of places. We are to not worry about what grows up but it is the production of fruit and the propagation of the Gospel that is essential.

In our work places, in our homes, in our families you and I are to bear the fruit of the Gospel. Which for Jesus is very clear. We are to be the family of God. We are to care for young and old, rich and poor, the powerless and the powerful. We are to bring all to a closer knowledge of God and of his son Jesus Christ. We are to so proclaim the Good News that those around us find the transformation they are seeking.

Beneath this parable is a bedrock assumption of divine abundance that we too rarely trust when we think about God. There is seed enough to lose and the God who makes sun to shine and rain to fall upon both the righteous and the unrighteous is indiscriminate about sharing. Grace is flung and wasted everywhere. Thanks be to God.