

Last year I sowed or planted some Indian vegetable seeds in my little garden. Nothing happened. The seeds did not even sprout. I had got some good soils from some parishioners. I used to water the soil and waited and waited for the seeds to germinate. But nothing happened. This year again, I sowed the Indian seeds again. And I had expected a failure even this year. But, to my great surprise some of the seeds sprouted and now the plants are growing. Of course, this year I knew how to better take care of the soil and the plants. I even used miracle grow. So, the plants are growing nice and well. I already see some flowers in the plants.

This Sunday we hear about the parable of the seeds and the sower. This is clearly a missionary parable having three elements: seeds, the sower and the varying conditions of the soil in the field which is the world.

Those who know only modern farming may not understand it and say that why on earth the sower allowed some seeds to fall on the rocky ground and on the thorny bush. In the traditional farming, seeds are simply thrown by hand on the ground and not by the machine as it is done today. This method is still used in many developing countries. Obviously, the seeds are spread by hands, some of the seeds get scattered away to unwanted grounds where the sower does not intend them to fall.

There are four types of different grounds: the wayside, the rock, the thorns, and good soil. We heard that what happened to the seeds which fell in the first three types of soils. Only those seeds which fell on good soil produced fruits.

Similarly, all of humanity fits into one of these four categories, and the majority will perish. This is true in our age and has been true in every age. The majority of people will not inherit the Kingdom of God, because they are not the good soil. And yet our Lord and Savior still sows His seeds, and still gives the opportunity to all people to accept Him and to produce fruits.

Today's parable explains why many people drift away from their faith. In USA, only about 30 percent of the baptized Catholics are practicing. There are two priests from my home diocese working in Europe. They tell me that the situation there is worse than USA.

This parable also explains why many years of efforts by the missionaries fail to produce any tangible results. For example, In India, the seeds of Christianity were sown by St. Thomas the Apostle himself. But, in 2000 years, only about 3 percent of the over 1.25 billion are Christians

Today's parable of the sower teaches us two lessons. First, we are all soils to receive God's Word. So, let us examine and see what kind of soils we are? Let us examine and see are we producing the fruits God wanted us to produce. Personal prayers, sacraments of the church, especially the Eucharist are some of the ways and means we can water and fertilize the seeds in us to grow and produce fruits.

The second lesson from this parable is often forgotten. And that is, we are also sowers of God's seeds of Faith among others among people around us.

And next weekend gives you a concrete opportunity of sowing the seeds of faith around the world with your generous donations to Diocesan mission Collection. Through this collection seeds of faith are sown in Peru, in Africa, in Philippines and even in India including my home diocese. From the help from this collection in my home diocese Bishop Kerketta has able to start three new parishes recently. Please read the Bishop McKnight's letter and Mission Bulletin for more details on how this collection helps the mission dioceses around the world to sow the seeds of faith. So, be generous.