

1. The passage of the sower and the seed is a very earthy parable, no pun intended. The purpose of the parable is to help us understand the role of receiving the word of God into our life and Jesus explains each type of ground and the result. The analogy is very obvious as Jesus explains it very clearly. The questions to be asked are what kind of soil am I? and depending on what kind of soil I am what can I do to become more fruitful so that I can bear more fruit?
2. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that the word that goes forth from my [his] mouth; and my [his] word shall not return to me void. What is this word? We must turn to the gospel according to Saint John where he begins with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This word that Isaiah and John speak of is Jesus and the result of Jesus' life is fruit that cannot be measured. The Church in our day and age communicates the fruit of Jesus' life to us.
3. Recently I watched a short video that features Rev. Mike Schmitz, who is a well know priest from the Duluth, MN diocese. He is the director of the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota at Duluth. The title of the video is 'What Constitutes a Practicing Catholic?' and in this video he highlights the following points: observing the commandments which is what I have been writing about in the bulletin for past few months. A second point is that we ascent or believe in the official teaching of the Church. The third point is to observe the 5 precepts of the Church which include: attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation, receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation once per year, receiving Holy Communion once per year, observe the days of fasting and abstinence during Lent, and provide for the material needs of the Church according to one's ability. Each of these things are the bare minimum and obviously there is more that can be done.
4. The reason I bring this up is because we need guidance in how live out our faith just as much as we need guidance to live out the other parts of our life. One of the elements of Church teaching is that each family is meant to be a domestic church. When something like an animal is domesticated it means that something becomes more ordinary and familiar. The early Church father Saint John Chrysostom offers us these words: "The only thing that matters is that we should not be a beaten-down thoroughfare, or rocky ground, or thorn, but that we should be good soil...Our hearts must not be that path from

which the enemy, like the birds, snatches the seed trodden underfoot by passers-by. Our hearts must not be the rocky ground where the shallowness of the soil causes the seed to germinate immediately so that it is scorched by the sun. Our hearts must not be a thistle-bed of human passions strangled by the cares of this world.”

5. Our task throughout the rest of this Mass and this coming week is to ask ourselves what kind of soil we are and offer an honest answer. Another question is do I want to become like the soil that will bear the most fruit. My prayer for you and for myself is that we strive to become a follower of Christ, to thank him and praise him for his workings in our life. I leave with some words of challenge and encouragement from Saint Josemaria Escriva: “We can never be content with what we are doing to serve our God, just as an artist is never satisfied with the painting or statue he is working on. Everyone tells him how marvellous it is, but he thinks: “No. It isn’t quite right. I wanted it to be better.” This is how we should feel.

Moreover, the Lord has given us so much. He has a right to the very best from us... and we must go at his pace.”