

# Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 13th, 2008

**READING 1: Isaiah 55:10-11**

My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.

**Psalm 65**

The seed that falls on good ground shall yield a fruitful harvest.

**READING 2: Romans 8:18-23**

...hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 13:1-23**

But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirty fold

God's message, like the seeds in one of Jesus' parables, needs to penetrate deeply in order to take root in us. But these seeds can easily bounce off the top of our thick heads. We need to be open; we must look and listen carefully.

Four brothers gather every year for a week at a great golf course. They were raised by a single mom who worked hard to provide for them and their education and now they were very successful professionals. When they arrived at Sawgrass this year there was a large brown envelop waiting for them. It was addressed in their mother's unmistakable handwriting. So, after their first day on the golf course they sat on the patio at their condo and opened the envelope.

As he opened the envelope the oldest brother said, "You guys know how busy I am and I haven't had a chance to visit mom in about three or four years. So, I had a beautiful mansion built for her." The second brother said: "I haven't visited her either but when I heard you were building the mansion, I got the contractor to add a fifty seat theater so she could invite her friends over and they could watch the kind of old movies that they like." The third brother said, "I bought her the top of the line Mercedes so she could drive up to that mansion in style." Then the fourth brother said, "You know how Mama loved reading the Bible and you know she struggles because she can't see very well. Well I met a preacher who told me about a parrot that can recite the entire Bible. It took twenty preachers 12 years to teach him. I had to donate

\$250,000 to the church, but it was worth it." "Mom just has to name the chapter and verse and the parrot will recite it." The other brothers were impressed. Then they solemnly opened the thank you letters sent to them by their mom. Mom wrote: "Milton, the house you built is so huge. I live in only three rooms, but I have to clean the whole house. But it is beautiful, thank you." "Michael, you gave me an expensive theater but all my friends are dead, I feel lost sitting alone with all those empty seats so I just watch my TV in the kitchen. It was a nice thought, thank you." "Mark, the motor vehicle department won't renew my license, so I don't drive anymore. I stay at home and I have my groceries delivered, so I never use the Mercedes. But I have to go out and wash it and it looks good sitting there in the driveway, Thanks." "Dearest Gerard", she wrote to her fourth son. "You have the good sense to know what your mother likes. The chicken you sent was absolutely delicious!"

A simple joke, but even so, we each hear it differently. Jesus taught in parables, little stories with punch lines that not everyone got. Some people look but don't see, listen but don't understand. So, the question is, "Are we open or closed to the good news of God's generous love?" We are so tough on ourselves. Sometimes during our childhood, sometimes along the journey, we take on false values. We convince ourselves that if we tried a little harder everyone in our family would get along. We convince ourselves that if we earned just a little more money our families would be secure. We think our families would be content if we were different than we are. I could go on but all these are seeds planted by our enemy. God plants seeds of love and joy and gratitude; the devil plants seeds of discontent, dissatisfaction and dysfunction. Do we realize that every time we say, "God, I love you;" God says "thank you?" Do we realize every time we say, "Thank You, God!" God says "I love you?" Do we realize that God is like a loving parent who has given us life and talent and opportunity and like a good parent only longs for a little gratitude and to see us happy,. None of us is everything we'd like to be because none of us are God. There are no perfect places, unless it is heaven. I just pray that we would grow to love ourselves for who God created and knows and loves, incidentally, that is who God loves, and we can be grateful for the Good News!

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