

Homily for the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time – A **July 10, 2005**

Isaiah 55:10-11

Romans 8:18-23

Matthew 13:1-23

Driving east on Route 2, just before entering the rotary at the prison,
there are fields on the right hand side planted in amazingly straight rows.
I'm not sure what's planted there - but it's definitely a healthy crop.
You might say it's growing like weeds - except that there aren't any weeds!
Day by day, just passing by, you can see the growth.
It's like the seed in today's parable that fell on rich soil
and grew to yield an abundant harvest.

Driving by there every day,
I have found some comfort in watching those plants grow.
In spite of whatever burdens or problems or worries
I'm carrying with me in the morning,
these plants just go about the business of growing,
asking only for water and light, and maybe some weeding now and then,
to nurture them to harvest time.

Ya know - there are days when I'd like to be a plant in those fields!
Just soaking up moisture and sunshine all day,
basking in the moonlight by night,
and letting God do in me what God does best:
nurturing me to be what God made me to be,
to yield what God wants to harvest from my life.

Of all green thumbs, God's is the greenest.

Wherever I have been planted and sprung up,
God has the love and patience and power to nurture me to harvest.

However dry the soil in which I find myself planted,
God is ready to water it with his kindness and mercy,
to refresh and restore me.

Whatever may be choking my growth,
God is there with pruning shears,
ready to cut away what keeps me down.
The secret is to let God farm my life,
cultivate my growth, prune away what threatens my survival,
and weed out what saps my strength and stunts my growth.

Every one of us here is a seed -a good seed!- God has planted
and whom God is intent on bringing to full growth and harvest.
Unfortunately, we often frustrate that growth by
- complaining about where we've been planted
- grouching about the other plants in the field around us,
- or wishing we'd been a tomato rather than a potato,
a carrot rather than a zucchini!

And sometimes we resist the weeding and pruning we need
to free us to grow and blossom and yield the harvest God wants of us.

But God is patient with us
and with God, the growing season never ends...

We need, like plants,
to turn our faces to the sun when it shines
and to let the rains soak us with refreshment when they come.

And, like God,
we need to be as patient with our growth
as is the farmer with the fields.
Every day's growth is a miracle -no matter how small that growth may be-
and brings us closer to the harvest of life within us.

At the Lord's table,
we are fed with bread and wine,
fruit of the field, fruit of the vine,
become for us, in the power of the Spirit
the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

May the food of this table, once the harvest of the earth,
yield the harvest of God's life planted and nurtured within us.

Rev. Austin Fleming