

**Being Rich Soil**    Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time    Friday, July 28, 2017    8:15 AM  
Ex 20:1-17;    **Mt 13:18-23**    (What matters is that we hear and respond.)

**“But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”**

So this particular part of the parable is talking about the audience, how **the audience is really like a field itself, and parts of the field are very receptive and parts aren't**. Now we might question whether there's any choice involved here. Well I think the whole concept of the parable is, yes, **there is a choice involved**. The one who is a footpath, hardened, completely not receptive to a seed, is a person who has become that way; now of course probably didn't set out to be that, but has allowed that to happen. So this parable is calling us to **be reflective on: what is happening to us? What has happened to us?** Sometimes people get too analytic and they are always trying to go back and find causes. That's really not so important. The important thing is, **what are we going to do from now on?**

People growing up in this world are deprived of a sense of being of God, what we call **“divine adoption.”** **The meaning of Baptism is that we are brought into the very family of God.** We are made images and likenesses of God in fact, in truth, in power, in grace. But that's what we are created for in the first place. There is no other plan; there never was. The plan of God in the very beginning was **to bring up children of his own nature**, who could live his life, who could do his work. Unfortunately, the world is a place where people are deprived of that for whatever reason. St. Augustine said original sin; that's just a word, a phrase. The fact is **we have been deprived of this great gift.** And God is not willing to leave us deprived, so he has come now to help us to be reborn, to be **reestablished by sharing the life of Christ who is both God**

**and human**, who is full of life because he is God, but who is also able to identify with us completely because he is human, and thus to lift us up to a new life.

But **we need to cooperate**. We can allow the deprivations that we have suffered just being on this planet, living in the families we live, we could let them continue to dominate us, or **we can turn to Christ. We can search for healing**.

Now various statements here could be taken for representing different problems in life, some of them caused by others, some caused by ourselves. Either way it doesn't matter. **What matters is that we hear and respond**. And wanting to respond is being that fertile soil because **if we want to respond, the word of God will bear fruit in us**. That is the clear message of the gospel. It's one of hope. It's one of, if you dare say, optimism, not the silly optimism of people who just think everything will always be wonderful, but **the optimism of someone who sees the work of God and sees the work of God bearing fruit and knows that gradually people will want it and accept it**.