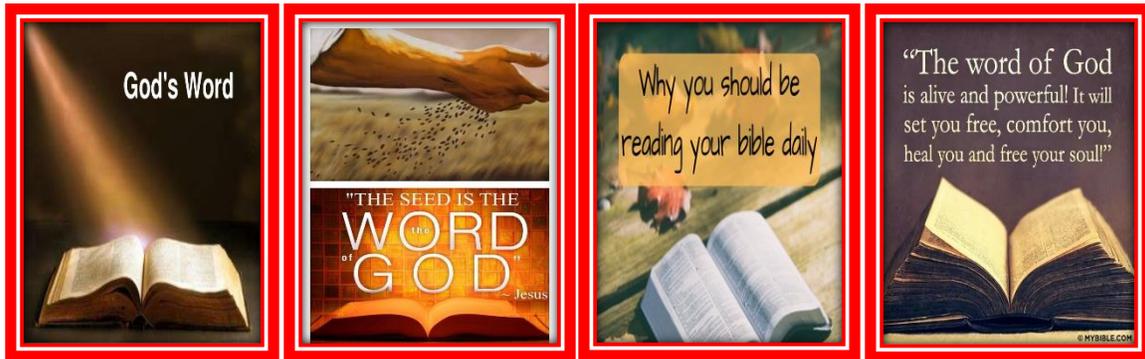


July 24, 2020 – Friday of the 16th Week in Ordinary Time



**“Discovering the Bible as the mighty source, containing the immensity of God’s Power and encountering the Lord Himself”
(Jer 3:14-17 and Mt 13:18-23)**

One of the most famous persons who had been greatly impressed and influenced by the Holy Bible was Mahatma Gandhi. He once made a statement, which would make all of us examine deeply our level of love for the scriptures and make relevant changes in order to match our lives with the teachings of the Bible. This statement goes thus: **“You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilization to pieces, turn the world upside down and bring peace to a battle-torn planet. But you treat it as though it is nothing more than a piece of literature”** Now, that indeed is a mightily powerful statement, isn't it? That's an intense statement of, on one side, our Sacred Scripture being acknowledged as having tremendous power to transform as having the remarkable force to bring about changes and yet, on the other side, We, the caretakers and promoters of the Bible – the Christians – being people who give very minimal respect and reverence and fail to find the worth of the treasure that is in possession. Well, it is left to each one of us to examine, in the light of this statement, whether the Holy Bible has become a constant and regular companion of my life and the Sacred Scriptures have become a catalyst for effecting personal transformation

The Gospel of the Day is the beautiful explanation, by Jesus, of the Parable of the Sower and through it, a reminder for us to revive our delight in and our dedication to, in living the Word of God.

The famous author Mark Twain once said: **“Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture which they cannot understand; But as for me, I have always noticed that the passages in Scripture which trouble me most, are those which I do understand.”**

The passage in consideration – the explanation of the Parable of the Sower (Mt 13: 18-23) – is surely one which has come very often under our scanner of reflection and meditation. We almost know each of its elements in detail: • The Sower sowing the seed • Some falling on the wayside and birds devouring them. • Some falling on the rock and

after quick sprouting, withering away. • Some falling among the thorns and failing to grow, suffocated by its choke. • Some falling on the good seed and yielding – a thirty, a sixty and a hundred-fold. We also have understood its applications in our life. *Yet, very often, its implications fail to take root in us and we remain indifferent or casual regarding the Seed – the Precious Word of God.* Today, therefore, the Lord once again seeks to awaken our minds and shake our lethargic minds, in seeking to revive our love and enthusiasm for His Word.

In Jesus' interpretation of the parable of the sower, Jesus shows a realistic grasp of the obstacles within and around us to his presence and to his word, obstacles which he himself has to somehow overcome. However, that realistic picture should not lead us to discouragement. The message of the gospels as a whole is that the Lord's persistence is stronger than those obstacles. When on one occasion Jesus' disciples asked him the rather despairing question, 'Who can be saved?', Jesus replied, 'For mortals, it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible'.

Here are some of the practical pointers for self-introspection, towards this objective

1. What is my reading habit with respect to the Bible – God's Word...?

Have I read the Bible fully, at least once? If YES, why not make efforts to read “the beautiful expressions in God's love-letters”, once again. If NO, why not make a bold step to try to read the Bible fully, at least once.

• *One could perhaps, start with some of the easier books/sections of the Bible may be, the New Testament, or the Psalms, etc. • Sometimes we might feel too bored or disinterested to pick up the pages of the Old Testament – some passages might seem even disturbing or distressing. Yet, when we understand that those were some of the societal manners that existed back then, and Scriptures were written by human authors, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in concrete life-situations, we would be able to appreciate them much better. Can I set apart, daily, at least a few minutes to read the Bible? Can I make genuine efforts to memorize at least a few verses from the Bible? • These verses can be invoked in our moments of prayer, in our moments of needing spiritual strength, in our moments of deepening the faith, etc.*

2. What is my effort and dedication in putting into practical effect the Bible – God's Word...?

*Am I a person who only **simply reads the Bible – without making efforts to understand it**, or one who **fails to try to put into practice** what I learn from God's Word? Is my love for the Word of God only finding expression in forwarding 'Daily Bible Verses' through social media sites/apps, emails, or SMS'S or do I also try to apply and live those verses in my day-to-day activities? These days, we have access to – especially through the internet and many magazines and books – an innumerable amount of Bible Study material, explanations on the Bible, sermons and reflections, etc.*

• Do these become a springboard for me to personally learn more and deepen my

spiritual bond with the Lord of the Word; or do I only take these, without making any personal reflection and use it for giving sermons, talks, etc.

Has the Word become a personal and intimate life-giver for me, and do I have a deep thirst to know and grow more in the Word?

As Christians, we are privileged and prized – to possess the Precious Book of God’s Salvific acts – in the Holy Bible. As it is said, “The **BIBLE** contains **B**(asic) **I**(nstructions) **B**(efore) **L**(eaving) **E**(arth)”

The Bible is a treasury of immense love, a source of unmatched transformative power, and a supplier of unparalleled strength and grace towards salvation. Let us realize that we have a “Document containing enough dynamite to bring peace to a battle-torn planet!”. Do I treat The Bible just an ordinary piece of literature, a lifeless object to be just decorated (or in some cases, dusted and dirtied) and a book of sacredness but still untouched and unexplored or can I discover It to be the mighty source, containing the immensity of God’s Power and encountering the Lord Himself, “Who is the Word – that became flesh and dwells among us”?

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, help me to guard the word you have planted in my heart that no doubt or temptation may keep me from believing and obeying you. May I be fruitful in your service and may I never fear to speak of you to others and to share with them the good news of the Gospel.

Jesus, I Trust In You