

Fifteen –A- Summertime Sunday ~ July 12, 2026

Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-9

Homily, Father Ed Hislop



THE IMAGE IS STRIKING. Scattering precious seed with an almost reckless abandon. A waste, some would say. An inept farmer, others would complain. What a waste of effort and time.

But the story is not so much about the seeds or the manner they are scattered but really about the place they fall, the kind of soil that receives the seeds.

Every place, every kind is worthy, worthy of a chance, worthy of embracing life, worthy of an opportunity to receive the seed and embrace the gift of growth.

The story, the parable, is more about the soil than the seed, more about the earth and the care it requires; more about the ability of the earth to receive the seed, nurture it in rich soil, care for it with flowing waters and protect it as a precious gift.

The story is about us, each of us and all of us together. It is about those who nurture the soil; those who waste and choke it and those who use it so uncaringly that it loses depth and the ability to nurture life.

The story is about us—we are the soil, the ground onto which the seeds of hope, mercy, justice, compassion are scattered with an almost reckless abandon. The story is about us, who dwell on the earth, about every community of people, every

nation, every religion, every kind of people, who like the soil, dwell on the face of God's good earth.

Some live on the paths or streets, running from their homes with no place to live—no time or place to plant or nurture the earth. Others on the streets of hate and isolation, uprooted from their right to grow.

Some live on the rocky ground of self-righteousness refusing to read the signs of the times, failing to believe the truth of the earth's struggles, immovable as rocks, determined not to change. Others are those who lack the depth of heart, mind, and spirit to see beyond themselves, their own perspectives, their own lives, or futures. Others, who seek to believe, to nurture and care for the soil of the earth, are choked, ridiculed, by the thorns of fear, anger, hatred, prejudice, lies and ignorance. Faith, vision, and compassion for God's earth is choked out by the thorns of ignorance, disbelief, denial, and complacency.

But there are others who receive the seed, rich in the nutrients of vision, and care, who hope that creation itself would be *"set free from the slavery to corruption,"* as the earth, so evident today, *"groans in labor pains."* It is upon that kind of soil that the scattered seeds of hope and transformation can produce an abundant harvest of an earth set free. The seeds of care for God's planet earth, the seeds of hope for the future are being scattered with a reckless abandon and a fiery hope that they will finally fall on good ground and rich soil. Pope Francis scattered those seeds in the Encyclical *"LAUDATO SI, ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME."* Our sister earth he writes, *"now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also*

reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air, in the people, and in all forms of life.” “This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste... , “groans in labor pains.” We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust, soil, of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive the life and refreshment of her waters.” LS2

We are the soil of which Jesus speaks. Upon us the seed is scattered with a seemingly reckless abandon. Which soil are we—as persons, families, community, nation? Which soil do we want to be? The worn hard path, the rocky ground, the soil choked by thorns and lies, or the fertile receptive soil producing a rich harvest of hope? Whichever soil we are, we are all the soil of one earth.

Our current political environment inspires, and even demands, division and a continual effort to deny the truth we can see all around us. We, as a people of faith seeking to live the Gospel, must still

do what we can to protect our human home; to both seek and speak truth clearly and with vigor trusting that *“The Creator does not abandon us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.” LS*

Words of hope for our earth and for us all during these days of unprecedented rising temperatures, fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, flood, resulting in human death, displacement and the need to search for another home.

Still, God’s word is strong, loving, and wise, as we have heard: *“My word shall not return to me void but shall do my will.” “We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains...”* We feel it today.

Caring for God’s creation is caring for one another. Healing the earth is healing the human family: worth the effort, struggle and the time. As we shall sing, *“We till the earth, we tend the ground, sowing hope and peace where none is found.”*

“WHOEVER HAS EARS, OUGHT TO HEAR.”

