

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 17, 2018
Fr. Rick Lorenz

Reflection

Yesterday morning I had two interments: one at St. Patrick's of Fallowfield, and one at Beechwood. These words of committal are spoken right before the urn is placed in the ground: "we are dust and unto dust we shall return." We do have a connection to the earth. Our bodies are made from the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. And before we begin all that business of eating and drinking, what will become us is a little egg by our mother's womb. It turns out that each woman is born with a full set of egg cells in her ovaries. The egg that became you came into being in your mother's ovary - within the womb of your maternal grandmother. Some tiny portion of what grandma ate, when she was pregnant with your mom, went into the seed from which you were sprung. Like a Russian doll: you, your mom, your grandmother. No wonder we feel some link to our ancestral village. The word "motherland" is more than metaphor, but speaks to our origin, where we began to begin. In my case, it was a farm outside St. Eustache, Manitoba in August 1938 - about 20 weeks before my mom was born - myself and my sisters too. And the growth of a child in the womb happens beyond our power and control, like the growth of any creature, "as if a man would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, without his knowing how."

Eze 17:22-24
Ps 92
2 Cor 5:6-10
Mk 4:26-34

Of course, there's more to us than the physical, more than the food eaten by grandma and mom. Paul told the Romans that "the kingdom of God is not a matter of food or drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17)." We do share the properties of life with plants and animals. But there's more to us than that. We are called to eternal life in the glory of heaven, which will be fulfilled in the resurrection. We have an immortal soul that will know God in proportion to the love that we share. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, "He who possesses the more charity, will see God the more perfectly, and will be the more beatified (ST 1.12.6)." The more we grow in love today, the more that we will see God tomorrow. And that's why Jesus came - yes, to save us from our sins - but even more: to lead us to sainthood on the heights of "a high and lofty mountain;" to "flourish in the courts of our God."

In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is as if a man would scatter seed on the ground." In his divinity, he is the seed that is scattered, the word of God: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14)." His words, planted in our hearts, grow and change us over time, "like a cedar in Lebanon." We accept his word in order to enter the kingdom (543). He is the seed in his divinity, and in his humanity, he is the sower.

He took on our poverty of flesh, hunger and thirst in order to love the poor: those who accept his word with a humble heart. Following him, we love the poor, and so we remain in the kingdom (544). He is the seed, he is sower, he is the kingdom of God. And us? We are the ground, the field; the dirt and the dust, striving through grace to join the kingdom.

Do we let ourselves become the hard soil of indifference? The rocky soil of distraction? Are we choked with the weeds of attachment?

Or are we the good earth where the seed can sprout and grow (546)?

It's our prayer that makes us fruitful, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. Prayer is nourished by reading Scripture, which lets us come to know Jesus (2653). We offer our prayer in the great events of our life, and the little moments of the day (2660). God responds to our prayer, and so prayer is hearing. For this Eucharist, let us listen with the obedience of a servant, the acceptance of a child, and the loving commitment of a disciple (2716).