

July 19, 2026 Homily
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/071926.cfm>

Often, we may feel discouraged by the terrible events that are happen in our world. It is frustrating to see how we have normalized all forms of violence and hatred, and all kinds of immorality and greed. I know many of us feel discouraged by the lack of ethics and humane orientation in the agendas of world leaders. Even our religious leaders are not always people of righteousness at a basic level, and some Christians lose their motivation to keep their faith alive.

This Sunday's readings, give us a word of encouragement. The Gospel is meant to speak to a discouraged church. Jesus has suffered a number of discouragements. He has called disciples, telling them, "I will make you fishers of men!" and fishing has not been good. Jesus and his disciples have experienced much rejection, hostility, apathy, and discouragement. So right then, Jesus tells the story of the sower. The Divine Sower has prepared the ground. And the Sower throws abundant seeds on it. An enemy of the Sower also plants weeds with the wheat. If we judge with the standards of the world, the parable describes an agricultural failure. But in God's way, Jesus just loves throwing abundant seeds. There is not success until the end, just for a few grains of seed that fell on "good soil" and bring forth a great and abundant harvest.

We have a message of hope. Jesus calls us to be focused on the success that the seeds in good soil can achieve. The seeds are the Word of God in its many expressions. We have to do something with this God given gift. It is not enough just to hear the Word of God. We have to let it grow within us to such an extent that we are covered in its greenery. We are the soil where the Word has been planted. It is simply not enough to go to Church. We have to become Church. It is not enough to read the Bible. We have to become people of righteousness. The Divine Sower is throwing out big, huge handfuls of seeds. He is pouring out his Word upon us. We have to do something more than just let the seed hit the ground. We have to become good soil, to nourish and strengthen the Word of God, to let it take root, grow and produce its fruits.

So we hear the words: Love one another. That's nice. But it is useless unless we are able to look at each other with love and respect. It is not enough for the Word of God to be scattered into a home if we allow immorality and hatred to dwell in our families.

God's Word must take root. When it is nurtured by our prayers, and cared for with our charity, it will grow. The weeds planted by an enemy are our actions that do not allow God's Word to produce its fruit within us and among us. If we want God's word to grow, we have to deny our pride, our selfishness and our hatred. It is a challenge and it is suffering for us. But then, the Word of God will take root and grow. The Divine Sower throws his Word on us so that we can look with love and compassion on all the people in the world. We live under the constant threat of racism, and many other forms of discrimination. And we cannot return hatred with hatred, otherwise, we may end trampling the seeds of God under our feet. The Word of God calls us to pray for our enemies. I know it is hard to pray for them, particularly if someone close to us has been hurt or killed by a close enemy.

The world supports immorality in the name of freedom and political correctness. Some of us participate in the worst of our society in the name of liberty. The Lord calls us to be good soil, and this call means to be men and women who stand up against the immoral aspects of our society. In the history of the Catholic Church, only few have taken this call seriously, and their fruits of their sacrifices make it possible for us to profess and celebrate our faith today. Currently, only few continue taking seriously the call to be good soil: Like in the mix of good seeds and weeds, we are not meant to be a majority. Jesus was followed by a few disciples who produced abundant fruits throughout the centuries. And two thousand years later, we still have the Church, we still celebrate the Sacraments, we still have a pope, bishops and priests, and many men and women taking seriously the call to become good soil.

The fruits of the Word are communities bound together by faith, love and charity, disciples willing to establish societies based on justice, truth and love for human dignity. There is good soil everywhere. Today we pray for the courage to become good soil.

The Universal Prayer
Sunday 19th July 2026
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, St Paul has encouraged us in our prayer, for when, in the face of difficulties we cannot find the words to express our needs, the Holy Spirit will help us in our weakness.

1. That the Church will always pray in the Holy Spirit, so that every member will open their hearts to God, who knows our deepest longings.

We pray to the Lord.

2. That in a world full of the weeds of greed, lies, violence and corruption, we will find in the word of Jesus the grace to be generous, truthful, peace loving and to act with integrity.

We pray to the Lord.

3. That we will trust in the justice of God, which is our strength, so that the virtuous will think kindly of others.

We pray to the Lord.

4. That those who are burdened with sickness, with its pain, sense of isolation and fear, will find in those who are called to care for them kindness, comfort and peace.

We pray to the Lord.

5. That every place burdened with war and violence, will see justice triumph in their cause.

We pray to the Lord.

6. That the Diocese of Raleigh and the religious order of the Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe will experience an increase in the number of vocations, to the priesthood and to religious life

We pray to the Lord.

7. That all of our departed parishioners, relatives and friends will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the heavenly Father.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger, turn and take pity on us, so that we are embraced by your love and truth. Through Christ our Lord.