

Impact

Let your heart be moved.

Be changed by the word of God. Be changed by the Word of God.

"Thus says the LORD: Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; my word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it." (Is 55:10-11)

There is the word of God, words recorded in Sacred Scripture, that reveal who God is and what it means to live in right relationship with God and others. And there is the Word of God, Jesus Christ, who shows and shares God's love perfectly and who invites us, calls us, compels us to live as God desires. We are called to listen to God's word and to see God's love manifested in Jesus, the Word of God, so that we may be of one heart and mind with the Lord, bearing the fruit of God's love, justice, and peace in our lives, cities, and world.

All ears

We all know there is a difference between hearing and listening. Sometimes, perhaps often, we physically hear the things people are saying to us. We may hear the word of God proclaimed at Mass or in prayerful reading. We might hear the sound of a bird calling or child singing. But we do not always listen. With the word of God, we should be all ears. As St. Benedict says in his Rule, we should listen with the ear of our heart. We listen for the meaning of the passage in light of the circumstances of our lives and all that has been revealed through Scripture and Tradition.

Eyes wide open

Jesus looked beyond the surface and saw the pain, suffering, confusion, and sorrow of the people in his midst. He did not let anything stand between him and those who needed him. In seeing, he responded with God's mercy, forgiveness, and healing. As Christ's people, we are called to open our eyes to the needs of those around us. We must honestly examine our lives, admit that we are sometimes weak, selfish, complacent, or trapped by fear. With eyes wide open we see the ways we might show God's love through our attitudes and actions and resolve to respond as the Lord desires.

Hearts moved by love

Our Sunday readings this month challenge us to not only hear the word of God, but to take it deeply to our hearts, and to act on it. The word of God, we are told, is like a seed. Do we cultivate our hearts as good soil in which God's word may take root and grow? Do we open our minds to the challenge of living as Christ's people? Do we bear good fruit, as disciples and stewards who hear the call of Christ and respond with our lives? The Gospels may sound harsh at times, as Jesus describes the difference between those who are faithful and fruitful and those who are not. Yet when we allow God's Word to take root in our hearts, responding will not be burdensome, but rather, our lives will bear an abundant harvest of love in the world.

Faithful and fruitful

With our ears, eyes, and hearts open to the Word and the word, our lives will be transformed. Our hearts will be moved. We will become more like the One whose word we hear. Our listening to the Word of God will change us! We will be Christ's people in the world.

Impact this month

OPEN YOUR EARS

Prayerfully reflect on God's word and hear Christ's call more deeply in your life.

OPEN YOUR EYES

See the needs of people around you and the need for justice, peace, and hope in our world.

OPEN YOUR HEART

Allow God to transform your heart with love. Filled with love of God, make a commitment to love of neighbor.

BE FAITHFUL

Make a "conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be a follower of Jesus Christ, no matter the cost to yourself." (SDR, 1, adapted)

BE FRUITFUL

Examine your life, acknowledge areas of selfishness, prejudice, and complacency and resolve to take action.

Bring faith to life. Find life in faith.

How deep are your roots?

Gardeners know there is little as frustrating as carefully planting seeds, only to have the plant fail to bear fruit.

Jesus used the metaphor of seed and soil to show us what growing and living in faith is all about.

He was talking with people who were still getting to know him. He used a parable that many of us can relate to, to encourage them to allow the seed of faith in him to take root in their lives and to bear good fruit.

"Some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. Some seed fell among thorns. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold." (Mt 13:1-23)

The seed of faith has been planted in our hearts, but it is up to us to allow it to take root deeply and to impact the way we live. **How deep is the soil of**

your faith? Is it:

Shallow, where faith is at the surface of life, and temptation can easily take hold?

Rocky, saying you believe in God and want to follow Jesus, but wavering when difficulties arise?

Thorny, resolving to commit yourself to living faithfully, yet striving for material riches and worldly success?

Good, rooted in a life of prayer, active participation in the Eucharist, sacramental life of the Church, and the faith community?



Invite God to till, fertilize, and nurture the good soil of faith in your heart and life.

Bearing the fruit of faith

Faith in Jesus Christ calls us to look beyond ourselves, to assess the situations we encounter in our daily lives, and to make decisions as a response to the great love God has for humanity and for all of creation. "Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears because they hear," Jesus said to the disciples. (Mt 13:1-23, Gospel on July 16)

As people of faith, we grow in the ability to see the world and its people through the eyes of God, to hear the need to be good stewards of creation, to respond to the cry of the poor, the lonely, and the brokenhearted, to give of ourselves and our resources.

Faith is not meant to be abstract, but a driving force in our lives. Putting faith in Jesus means taking his way of life and making it our own. Think about that. Jesus spent time with people who were outcasts, poor, and forgotten. He offered people forgiveness, mercy, and peace. In Jesus, we see that the fruit of faith is to live for God and for others.

The fruit of faith is to touch the world with God's love. What fruit will you bear?

