

Liturgy Sessions

Sunday Morning Liturgy

(Accompanied by “New Wine, Fresh Skins! Morning Prayer Sunday Website Slides.pdf”)

“Sowing the Kingdom of God”

Sunday, 23 April 2023 9:30

OPENING PRAYER (Slide 1)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SONG: “Here I Am to Worship” by Tim Hughes (Slide 2)

Light of the world, you step down into darkness	King of all days, oh so highly exalted
Opened my eyes, let me see	Glorious in heaven above,
Beauty that made this heart adore you	Humbly you came to the earth you created
Hope of a life spent with you	All for love's sake became poor
And here I am to worship	I'll never know how much it cost
Here I am to bow down	To see my sin upon that cross
Here I am to say that you're my God	I'll never know how much it cost
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy	To see my sin upon that cross
Altogether wonderful to me	And I'll never know how much it cost
	To see my sin upon that cross
	No, I'll never know how much it cost
	To see my sin upon that cross

SCRIPTURE READING (Mark 4:26-32) (Slide 3)

He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.”

He also said, “What can we say the kingdom of God is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.”

PSALM 126 (Slide 4)

All read the Psalm antiphon aloud together at the beginning, and after each Psalm verse. Half of the group reads aloud together the first line of each Psalm verse (marked “A”), and the other half responds by reading aloud the following line (marked “B”).

Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap.

- A. When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage, it seemed like a dream
- B. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs
- A. The heathens themselves said, “What marvels the Lord worked for them!”
- B. What marvels the Lord worked for us; indeed, we were glad
- A. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage as streams in dry land
- B. Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap
- A. They go out, they go out full of tears, carrying seed for the sowing
- B. They come back, they come back full of song, carrying their sheaves
- A. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
- B. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap.



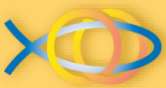
REFLECTION ON PERSEVERANCE IN SOWING THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Slide 5)

In November last year, a Polish-language feature film called “Prophet” was released about the life of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the defiant kingpin of the Catholic Church in Communist-era Poland, whose life and leadership are now looked on as having prepared the way for the man we all know as Pope St. John Paul the Great. The “Prophet” film is probably not known to anyone here, since it did not play in any cinemas in this country. But an online review of the film dwelt on its opening scene that depicts Wyszyński in 1953, at that time a Bishop, emerging from a term of imprisonment for speaking out against the Polish state. On the homeward journey he remembers to a travelling companion an incident from his time as a World War II chaplain. We don’t know whether the recollected incident is biographical or purely fabricated for dramatic purposes, but all the same Wyszyński recalls a Polish farmer calmly walking out into open fields in the middle of a bombardment, tossing seeds as he goes. The young Wyszyński rushes out to pull the man to safety, only for the beleaguered farmer to answer back nonchalantly, “We need to sow, or only wasteland will remain.”

“We need to sow, or only wasteland will remain.” “Use it or lose it.” “Everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” Even a little life experience—a few hours of housekeeping or tending the garden—is enough to teach one of the hard principles about how everything works: that it takes effort just to protect the things we value, let alone to develop them. Complete neglect and doing nothing means going backward. Scientists talk about entropy. A swept floor on which no one walks still gathers dust over time. From sports and fitness to music and foreign languages and any number of technical skills, perhaps every one of us here ruefully recalls some talent he or she let slide. We can’t chase every opportunity, for sure, but for what we choose as important, we have to keep sowing.

Teams Members like us can reflect on at least three crucial areas for sowing.

- ❖ First, there’s prayer, one of our Endeavours. Praying opens God’s way into our hearts, minds, and lives to influence our direction, reveal our mission, help us to become our best selves, now and for the next world. Our need of prayer is eloquently stressed and expressed in all kinds of spiritual writing. Wonderfully acute is God’s courtesy and gentleness toward us, maybe to the point of diffidence: that, despite all He knows about us, despite all His good will for us, despite His power to bring change and benefit, and call forth fruit in and through us, He just won’t force His way into our hearts. Instead, He waits. By setting ourselves to pray, we open the door.
- ❖ Some key things about prayer are:
 - ◆ As we know, prayer occasionally involves asking for this or that, material blessings for ourselves and others, relief from our own sufferings or those of others, but the real work of prayer is always to conform us to God—in how we see, how we think, how we love. Sometimes, for some people, conversions come in a flash, but for most of us, prayer needs practice over a long time. We have to keep sowing. Sowing is an act of faith in results to come, an act of surrender, and an act of love.
 - ◆ We need broad-mindedness about what prayer is, and readiness to keep experimenting with how to pray. Set prayers, scripture meditation, invoking the saints or any of our spiritual forebears, sitting in the garden, or taking long walks can all be good for anyone at some time. Prayer is ultimately not just a spiritual journey, but your discovery of your spiritual identity, and therefore unique to you. Advice from others may help, but only God can truly lead you.
 - ◆ “Every moment and every event of every man’s life on earth plants something in his soul,” says Thomas Merton (Seeds of Contemplation, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1960). Constantly, continuously, God appeals to us, and everything everywhere is both opportunity and invitation to connect with Him.
- ❖ A second area for persistent sowing is highlighted by our Endeavour of the Sit-Down. Everyone knows how communication in our marriages must be constant, must occur on many levels, always demands thoughtfulness, and at times requires bravery. The guard against mixed messages between words and actions cannot drop, and even our unwitting silence sometimes leaves gaps



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that misinterpretation or false assumptions are all too apt to fill. Communication is tricky business. Thank God and Father Caffarel for the Sit-Down where we consciously bring our marriage and all we have to say to each other into the presence of the Lord. May the Lord make us perfect in the art of the Sit-Down, and make our Sit-Down a ground for good everyday habits. How do the Holy Trinity speak among themselves, and what do they find to discuss? May the communication in our marriages live up to the calling of our marriages as icons of the Trinity.

- ❖ Lastly, we must keep sowing the Teams Movement itself, that is, to keep offering Teams to others and encouraging new Teams to form. We salute all those in the past and still today who have shown zeal, energy, and initiative for sharing about Teams in their own parishes and elsewhere. Even better would be to emulate them. Maybe it's genuinely harder nowadays to find couples who want the spiritual help of Teams. On the other hand, because of things like the Monthly Virtual Mixed Team Meetings, we can now feed an expressed interest in ways that weren't easy to achieve going back a few years. The GB Province Team is thinking about this issue, but we can all do something. We should also take heart from what the recent Church Synod consultation has sown by highlighting in Paragraph 82 of its National Synthesis Report the importance of small groups like Teams in "deepening the bonds of belonging to Christ and to each other" and "fostering a synodal culture of humble listening and honest speaking". Teams serve the Church.

In our prayer, in our marriages, in our work for Teams, and in all things, Lord, make our lives bear constant witness to your Good News.

PRAYERS AND INTERCESSIONS *(Slide 6)*

Response: By your faith in me, may I show faith in you.

God of all times and seasons, thank you for your powerful Word that you plant in us...

God of planting and harvest, thank you for your patient tilling and sowing in the fields of our hearts...

God who multiplies the yield, make us courageous and authentic in bearing your love to others...

God who mends the crushed reed and nurtures the growing seed, increase our faith in your constant guiding presence...

God who grants us to share your labours, make us fruitful for the sake of your glory...

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

SONG: "Sowing the Good Seed" by Master's Voice *(Slide 7)*

[Click here to view the Music Video on YouTube.](#)