

## Word Sharing Circle (WSC) Reflection Guide

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle A, Year I)

July 16, 2017

### Community Word:

True disciples of Christ bear much fruit.

### Theme:

We bear much fruit when our hearts become rich soil for the word of God.

### Promise:

***“My word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.”*** (Is 55:11b)

### Reflection:

Disciples are learners who are expected to live what they learn and be committed to closely follow the Master who teaches them. Only those who “bear much fruit” will prove to be His disciples (Jn 15:8). Jesus offers his true disciples abundant life that comes from him and produces rich fruitfulness. With the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we are also gifted with new life, new nature, enlightened understanding and empowerment. This is the message of our Community Word for the month – True disciples of Christ bear much fruit.

For the 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, the theme supporting this message is: **We bear much fruit when our hearts become rich soil for the word of God.** In the gospel reading, the Parable of the Sower and the Seed (Mt 13: 1 – 23) is about the ground and seed, more than the sower. The seed that is sown is the message of the Kingdom of God. The soils are the hearts of people who receive, react or make decision about the message. These are the people who hear the message of Christ.

Some hear the message of truth, but like hardened paths, their hearts do not allow the truth to penetrate and be received so they cannot respond to the word of God with faith. Before long, Satan takes the truth away as the opportunity is stolen by the evil one. Some hear the message with exuberance, but like the rocky soil, the message does not take root. They are outwardly enthusiastic about Jesus, but inwardly they do not take the word to heart. They do not receive it with genuine thoughtfulness and faith and due to external pressures, it quickly dissipates. Some hear the message not with joy, but with “thorns” of apprehension as their life is filled with too many earthly concerns – other commitments and priorities, worries, and worldly attachments that choke out the message, preventing them to take it to heart. So, they are not ready and willing to yield beyond their pleasures and competing pressures. They would have to give up many things to make a commitment to Christ.

But some hear the message and believe. They are those whose hearts are like the good ground that receives the seed well, let it be nurtured and grow to bear fruit. Their hearts receive God’s word with faith that take root in their life and produce the fruit of righteousness and obedience. They are Christ’s true disciples. As authentic followers of Jesus, we bear fruit when our hearts become rich soil for the word of God. God prepares our hearts to receive the message with faith, and through faith He reveals the truth about His Kingdom. Surely, those who believe will produce much fruit. Added to it, ***“those who have, more will be given and will grow rich”*** (Mt. 13:12). They will be given ***“knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”*** (Mt. 13:11), as this knowledge is revealed to those who seek after the deep spiritual truths of God. Some of us will understand but others will not, unless you open your hearts and minds to receive God’s word and live it.

God's word is never spoken in vain and never fails to produce the purpose that He intends to accomplish. In Isaiah 55:11, God made this promise: ***"My word shall not return void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it."*** God is sovereign, omnipotent and gracious. There is nothing that happens in the universe without His permission and He is victorious over Satan, sin and death. His sacrifice, death and resurrection make salvation possible to all of mankind.

As true disciples, we are like the sower in the parable who have the responsibility to proclaim and spread the message of the kingdom of God, the Gospel of Christ, to our family, community and to rest of the world. We need to remember that the word of God is powerful and His word will produce results. Psalm 19: 8 – 10 speaks of the value of God's word: ***"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul; the decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the command of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eye; the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; and the statutes of the Lord are true, all of them just."***

#### **Prayer:**

Almighty Father, lead us towards the path of Your righteousness and humble obedience. Let not the "thorns" of our lives and allures of this world choke out the message of Your Kingdom which threaten to take us away from your Holy Presence. Instead, grant us the grace for our hearts to receive your message with great joy, profound faith and genuine love. Loving Father, help us to remain focus on Your word. Fill us with your Spirit and teach us so that we may be able to know You more, love You more and be ready and equipped to serve You more. All for Your glory. Amen

#### **Reflection Guides:**

1. What life experiences have you encountered that hindered the word of God from growing in your spiritual life?
2. What have you done to stop these life's thorns or hindrances from keeping you away from the Lord and turning your heart to be the rich soil or vessel for the word of God?

#### **This Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

July 16, 2017 (Sun) - Is 55:10-11/Ps 65:10-14/Rom 8:18-23/Mt 13:1-23

July 17, 2017(Mon) - Ex 1:8-14/Ps 124:18/Mt 10:34-11:1

July 18, 2017(Tues) - Ex 2:1-15/Ps 69:3, 14, 30, 31, 33, 34/Mt 11:20-24

July 19, 2017(Wed) - Ex 3:1-6, 9-12/Ps 103:1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7/Mt 11:25-27

July 20, 2017 (Thur) - Ex 3:13-20/Ps 105:1, 5, 8, 9, 24-27/Mt 11:28-30

July 21, 2017 (Fri) - Ex 11:10-12:14/Ps 116:12, 13, 15-18/Mt 12:1-8

July 22, 2017(Sat) - Sg 3:1-4/Ps 63:2-6, 8, 9/Jn 20:1-2, 11-18

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"