

Today, Jesus sits down by the seashore. Large crowds of people are listening. Jesus is speaking about the seeds that need to grow and bear fruit, about the dangers of lack of roots, about the dangers of being scorched by the sun, and thorns that might choke us up. He talks about hearing and not being able to hear. And the more he talks about it, the more a question is growing in my heart. Why? What does it mean? Is it not enough that I am the little one of the Gospel? That I cling in my little way to him, as he described it last week? Even as I ask myself this question, I realize very quickly that all of this is not that simple. What with my personality? What with my way of seeing the world? Anybody who thinks that all children are identical, trusting little creatures has never been at kindergarten lunch break.

Every child is different, and I am unique. That's why one-size-fits-all solutions don't work. Jesus does not propose a one-size-fits-all solution. What is it that makes me unique? Part of it is what I am born with; that's a gift from God: some talents, some qualities, but also the time and place I was born in. I don't have a choice about that. But the more I think about what I call "my way of seeing the world," the more I start seeing people, books, movies, places, ideas that were shaping my personality, my point of view, and my relationships through my whole life. From the oldest relatives that I barely remember to the closest, living friends that are never out of my mind. From the simplest books that I was forced to read in elementary school to my personal discoveries of authors and texts that shaped me. All those things were changing me, and very often made the difference between seeing and not seeing things; between understanding and not understanding reality. That's what Jesus had in mind when he said, "Blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear." Somehow I heard his voice among the noise of the world; somehow I recognized his face in the crowd of faces.

The more I allow his homily from the seashore to grow in my heart and mind, the more I realize something that, for him, was very important: I am the soil from the Gospel. I could be as hard as the path, hardened by thousands of human feet. I could also be like rocky ground in which nothing can develop roots. Finally, I could be this neglected meadow where many kinds of weeds tangle with each other, denying any possibility of even a flower. I do have a choice to make if I want to allow the word of God to dwell in me, if I want this great possibility of being a soil that yields hundredfold fruit.

"Jesus Christ became man to reveal man to himself." These famous words of Saint John Paul II uncover the mystery of the sower and the seed. Jesus revealed man to himself, which means everything that makes my humanity deeper makes my response to God deeper too. It means that I must grow in my humanity if I want to grow spiritually. Nothing is separated in God's intention. He made me uniquely and employed the whole creation, time and space, in His work. Then he planted in each one of us the possibility of continuing His creation. Every human being was given a grace of participating in God's creative work, for themselves and for others. This intense and difficult labor of responding to God's love with all my talents, in all my uniqueness, despite the hardness of the path, the darkness of the bushes, and the heat of the sun, allows me to develop and reveal my true identity, and allows us to communicate with each other at the depth we never expected possible. This toil also allows me to receive the word of God as only I

can do it, and to cling to his Love with strength and completeness in my own unique way. This individual, personal response that seemed impossible before the encounter with the Word of God, becomes the true revelation of God's will for me that He had from the beginning.

The story of the sower and the seed is truly an invitation for us to never give up in our search for God, and to never stop insisting on absolute honesty in recognition of His love. This story also offers to us a perfect portrait of God, the generous sower who spreads His Word around and lets his creatures receive it as a free and precious gift that has the power of revealing and protecting in us everything that is holy.