

Seeds of Life

My dear friend is a family therapist. I once asked her, “Marilyn, for how long do people come to see you?” She answered, “For many, no more than three visits.”

I wondered, “Marilyn, you’re either a lousy therapist or a miracle worker!” She said, “I’m neither. It’s just that after a few appointments, they leave. When people discover that our work together is going to be more than venting anger or pointing blame, they go away. Not everyone wants to tackle family dysfunction, confront an addiction, or face an unflattering piece of their personality. Not everyone who comes wants to change or even to grow up. So, we can’t go any further...”

I think of Marilyn’s words when I hear today’s gospel: “A sower went out to sow seed...Some seed fell on rocky ground...Some seed fell among thorns...But some seed fell on rich soil and produced much fruit.” (Matthew 13: 1-23).

At some point Jesus’ students began to wonder why his words weren’t always well received. Why wasn’t everyone wanting more of what Jesus said? Why are people in my family rejecting it? And, why is it that sometimes I find myself resisting it?

So Jesus explained that God’s word is like a seed with great potential. Within it is the capacity to help us “get it

right” when it comes to what really matters in life. But that potential can’t always take root. It gets choked by other interests, other distractions, other loyalties. Sometimes minds and hearts are closed.

Like the client in in Marilyn’s office. It can’t go any further. The potential is untapped.

Christ’s words are always inviting us to grow, becoming the better version of ourselves. But even when we resist, that stubborn seed finds a way of growing somewhere, somehow.

Years ago, my grandmother planted a plot of wildflowers in her backyard. For years it was an amazing swath of color every summer. But when the septic system had to be dug up and the backyard excavated, that strip of color disappeared forever.

Nonetheless, the seeds from that patch she planted have found their way to other places, other yards. They even grow in the cracks of the old driveway.

God’s transforming Word is a lot like wildflower seeds: always finding good soil, an open mind, a heart in which to thrive. The seed grows in surprising places.

Pray that we would be that place.