

Sowing the Seed

“Who was Albert Einstein’s arithmetic teacher in the second grade?” This, according to Fr William Bausch in one of his books of homilies, was how a certain Fred Hermann used to begin his speeches. I don’t know who Fred Hermann was but he was raising the question of who it was that sowed the seeds of greatness in Albert Einstein.

All great achievements have their beginnings in some inspiration or encouragement to achieve.

We can look back on our own lives and ask who has inspired and encouraged us along the way. More importantly, perhaps, we can respond to the challenge to reflect on what sort of seeds we sow in those whose lives we touch. Are we sowing seeds of greatness, seeds of honesty, integrity and love?

This week will include the celebration of World Youth Day in Sydney. What a field is available there for sowing the seed of the gospel. We can all play our part by praying to the Lord of the harvest to touch the hearts of participants so that they will provide fertile soil for his word.

The hope of course is that World Youth Day will bring new life to the Church in Australia and indeed throughout the world. It is a unique opportunity for the Church in Australia to be missionary and spread the good news of God’s love.

In today’s gospel we have Jesus’ parable of the sower and the seed. Scholars suggest that an important part of the message of the parable is encouragement – the harvest will be plentiful and so the disciples should have courage and not be afraid to spread the good news.

Again today we need to hear Jesus’ words “Do not be afraid”. Just as he told the disciples in his own time he tells us, “Happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy people longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear, and never heard it” (Matthew 13:16-17).

We have a message for our world – the good news of God’s love. We can’t afford to be afraid, intimidated by the hostility of our secular society. We have to be ready to stand up for what we believe.

Jesus never said that following him would be easy. St Paul knew what it was to suffer for proclaiming the gospel. In his letter to the Romans he says, “What we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us” (second reading).

In the longer form of this week’s gospel, mention is made of the differing results that can come from the sowing of the seed. We pray that God’s word will find in us and in the young people who attend World Youth Day rich soil, that its effects will not wither quickly away or be choked by the worries of life or the lure of riches. May it provide an abundant harvest in us and in the youth of the world.