

# PARABLES OF MERCY

## The Sower

*Luke 8 : 5 - 15*



# Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has initiated this Year of Mercy as an opportunity for pilgrimage, reflection and commitment to action that will enable Mercy to be made concrete and practical in our own local communities.

Thank you for your willingness to enter into this time of prayer and reflection. May it be an experience of Mercy which will enable you to further respond with Mercy and compassion in your local community.

## Lectio / Visio Divina

**Lectio Divina** is a Latin term meaning “Reading with God”.

**Visio Davina** is a Latin term meaning “seeing or looking with God”.

We hope that the parable windows will be a Lectio / Visio Divina for the community of pilgrims in the Year of Mercy so that we may also “See with God”.

The practice of sacred reading has been practiced in the church for centuries, and has its origin in the monastic life as a pathway for prayer with scripture. It leads us gently into a deeper relationship with Christ as we open ourselves to him. It is the ultimate DIY spiritual project.

Brendan Lodge Photography

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There are four steps in the traditional practice of Lectio Divina. But they do not need to be followed in this particular sequence.

**1. Lectio Visio (reading-looking)**

Look at the window slowly,  
read the scripture ...become aware of a particular  
word - phrase - colour - object or character.  
*(There is a page for your jottings inside the back cover.)*

**2. Meditatio (reflection)**

Let the significant word / object / colour / character fill your  
mind without straining to analyse them.  
You are in God's presence,  
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

**3. Oratio (prayer)**

Allow your heart to speak to God,  
in words or emotions inspired by the parable  
or the thoughts that have come to you while reflecting.

**4. Contemplatio (rest)**

Let go of ideas and words and allow yourself to rest in the  
presence of God in simple wordless contemplation.

(Adapted from the  
Lectio Divina pamphlet - NZ Catholic Bishops Conference 2011)



## The Sower: Luke 8 : 5 - 15

A farmer went out to sow his seed

Some fell on the path and the birds ate it up.

Some fell on the rock and withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and was choked.

Some fell into good soil, and produced a hundred fold.

The seed is the word of God.

*The good soil represents those who, when they hear the word (of mercy) allow it to grow and bear fruit with patient endurance.*

1. Look and be open to the parable window.  
Look for a particular colour, character, object,  
concept or word that may seem significant.

2. Let that which is significant fill your mind  
without analysing: you are in God's presence -  
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

3. Allow your heart to speak to God as you are  
inspired by the parable.

4. How am I called to respond?  
Allow yourself to rest  
in the presence of God.

At each of the parable windows, there are three basic questions:

- As I look and ponder the parable window what do I notice? Why?
  - Where is love, or mercy or faithfulness, compassion or forgiveness in this parable?
- How am I called to respond?

# A space for journaling:

*(Please jot down your thoughts and insights for further reflection)*

You may like to enter the parable window through your imagination, as a character or an object ... actually allowing yourself to experience the Mercy and Love of God.



A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold. As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the evil one comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance."

#### Psalm 95

If today you hear God's voice,  
harden not your hearts.

#### Isaiah 55:10

Yes, as the rain and snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving forth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

*Find the five birds, pink, black, yellow, red and the white dove of the Holy Spirit!*

*Ask the Holy Spirit to untangle and soften your hard places enabling you to produce wheat a hundred fold.*