

JULY 16, 2017

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ISAIAH 55:10-11

PSALM 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14

ROMANS 8:18-23

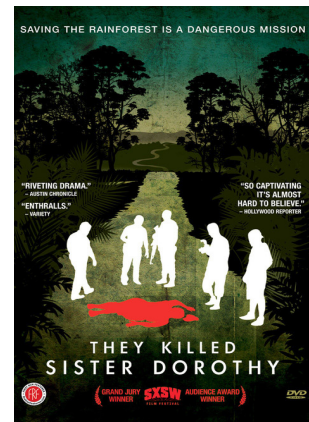
MATTHEW 13:1-23 OR 13:1-9

REFLECTION

All four of today's Scripture texts speak, in some way, to God's creation. Throughout all of these readings, creation serves as a powerful metaphor for the receiving of God's Word and responding to it. Taking the image of soil in receiving of God's Word, we learn that good soil produces good fruit while poor soil that is not well tended allows the seed to wither and die. The seed is always sown, but how it grows and flourishes depends on how it is received and nurtured once spread. When the word and soil unite together entirely and effectively, the result is abundance and brilliance of life.

ACTION

On June 18, 2015, Pope Francis issued a papal encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which focuses on the call to care for God's creation. Leading up to its publication, there was much debate surrounding the document. Some were thrilled that the pope was spending much effort and time examining the issue of climate change, while others were quite angered that he would do such a thing, arguing that the Church has no place in discussing such matters and should stay out of the realm of science. But the reality is that the earth and all who inhabit this planet are faced with a critical situation with regard to ecological realities. Go and read the encyclical itself. Absorb what it has to say and then go out and discuss it with others (and encourage them to read it as well!). http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html



Check out the documentary film, *They Killed Sister Dorothy*, which tells the story of Sr. Dorothy Stang, a seventy-three-year-old nun who was murdered in the Brazilian rainforest in 2005 after thirty years of working with environmentalists and underprivileged locals against those who exploited the rainforest and local communities: <http://theykilledsisterdorothy.com/>

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● Reflect upon the parable of the sower from today's Gospel. Where in your life is good soil being tended? Where are the rocky or thorn-infested areas? What might you do to be a good gardener and till the soil in your own life or prune out the thorns that are getting in the way of your receiving the Word of God and allowing it to flourish?