

15th Sunday in OT: Yr. A – 2020
[Is 55: 10-11; Rom 8: 18-23; Mt 13: 1-23]

We all feel a sense of belonging when we return home. Hence the popular sayings, “*Home Sweet Home*,” and “*There’s no place like home*.” If this is true for us, how much more true would it be for God? We should expect the Creator to feel at home within His creation. And yet that is not what happened. St. John wrote, “*He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.*” And at Jesus’ birth we recall, “*There was no room in the inn.*” There was room for everyone at the inn except the Savior of the World. Is this not a good metaphor for our receptivity to God in the inn of our heart?

In the first reading, the Word of God showers the earth like rain, and will not vanish until the earth becomes a reflection of God’s goodness. In other words, God generously showers us with grace and invitations because he expects growth. The prophet Isaiah tells us that when God speaks, things happen. God said, “*...my word shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it.*” God’s Word is creative, it brings life and new possibilities. In the book of Genesis, God spoke creation into existence from nothing and commented that it was good. Creation is good when we find a clear reflection of God within it. But why does He get His hands dirty, so to speak, in creating and sustaining all that is?

The answer is found in John 3:16, “*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...*” Brother Guy Consolmagno, the Vatican’s leading astronomer wrote, “[*St. John*] *doesn’t say God just loves people or goodness or souls God loves the world. [...] Christianity is an incarnational religion. The physical universe matters to religion. God so loved it that he became part of it. So what happens to it matters.*” “*God cares,*” wasn’t the message of Isaiah when he predicted: “*Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’*”

St. John also wrote, “*The Word (or Jesus) was made flesh...*” Our readings keep hinting at the fact that Jesus is God’s word to the world and He keeps speaking or sending His Son into creation. God’s word is powerful indeed. It can create the cosmos, all life within it, allow our God to take on flesh, and raise the dead, but it cannot take root and grow in a resistive heart. That’s the point of the Gospel – the only place we have complete control over making a welcoming home for Jesus is in our soul. We can start by doing it through relational prayer.

First, we must **acknowledge** our thoughts, feelings, and desires. Remember Psalm 139 says, “*Lord, you have probed me, you know me ... you understand my thoughts from afar.*” Second, we **relate** our thoughts, feelings, and desires to God in an unscripted manner just as we speak to a best friend or parent. Hold nothing back. Third, **receive** or listen for God’s response. His response is already written down in the Scriptures. Find a scripture that applies to your thoughts, feelings, and desires. It is easiest to start by searching the titles of the 150 Psalms in the Old Testament. Read the passage slowly twice and invite the Holy Spirit to stop you on a particular phrase or word that is meant for you. Then meditate on the selection that jumped out. Fourth, **respond** to God about what consolation, insight or grace you took away from the scripture. Journal it, pray into it until it no longer bears fruit, and tell God how you will move forward. Relational prayer consists of these four moves: **acknowledge, relate, receive, and respond**. Above all, tell God there is room in the inn of your soul and God’s Word will take root in you.

God entered His creation once and was rejected. When He enters again will He find a home in our soul? For St. Bernard of Clairoux asked, “*Can we stop loving the one who is Love ... ? Can the one who is Love by his very nature be unloved? Do not resist his love.*”