

I need your help with the homily today.

Sower went out to sew seed

Question to answer: Where do you think the majority of our community is today? What kind of soil is the Word of God planted into? I am going to give you four options to choose from. You need to choose one.

(divide community into four sections)

First section; The seed on the footpath: birds of the air eat it up; We have all met this kind of person: the one who hears about Jesus and the kingdom without understanding it. We all know people like this in our lives. They simply see nothing to religion except the outer shell. They have no spiritual depth.

Second section: Seed on rocky ground: sprouts up quickly and then withers for lack of roots: often people who get a job or a promotion or win the lottery; or enter into a happy marriage or at the time of their firstborn child. They receive the news of God's favor with joy but when tribulation and challenges come, they immediately fall away.

Third section: Seeds are sown in thorns and weeds. People who are caught up in worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word before it can bear fruit.

Fourth section: Seed planted in rich soil. It bears fruit of 30 and 60 and 100 fold.

Example of seed planted in good soil. Esther Nzoma who died last week . I have known her for over 25 years.

She lived down the street who brought her six children to help on park clean ups.

Member of the Presbyterian Church on Seven Mile Road.

Her son, Isaac, and some of the other children involved in a summer sports program sponsored by our church.

The family had immigrated from Kenya many years ago.

All that changed, deepened and matured one day when I about the care she and the Nzoma family was giving to a woman named Irene Donner. Irene was a woman who lived a few blocks from the Nzoma family. She was an old white member of the Presbyterian Church where the Nzoma family attended.

She lived alone and would occasionally come to services at our church.

Irene, was white, old and poor. But most importantly, she was a clutterer of the first degree. She was a pack rat. She never let anyone in her house. She always met you at the front door. Her children who lived in California had given up on her or just neglected her.

There were piles of stuff often four or five feet high everywhere in her house. She would put down a newspaper, then pile on top of the newspaper some White Castle hamburgers, then place her unopened social security check on top of that. Her house had become so cluttered that there was only a path about three feet wide left which went from room to room. The clutter became was so overwhelming that she could not even open the refrigerator.

Irene's health started to fail. Her family wanted nothing to do with her. She was a rather stubborn independent lady. Finally Esther talked her into coming over to the Nzoma house to live. I went over to visit Irene at the Nzomas. She was comfortably ensconced in the basement resting comfortably. Esther had contacted her family about the condition of their mother. She and the family simply cared for the lady.

Esther taught me a lot about life that day. Her deep faith in Jesus Christ which she had received as a young person from her family and the Presbyterian Church in Kenya was dominant in her life. She was living out the words of Jesus, "When I was hungry you fed, when I was thirsty you gave me to drink, when I was homeless you took me in."

Where do you think most of the people in our community are most of the time: like seed on the path with a very shallow faith; or people on

rock who just believe in good times and not in bad, or like seed which are stifled by the cares and lure of wealth or good seed which bear fruit like Esther Nzoma?

(get reaction)

At times in our lives we are in all four places. But I believe that the most of us are in section 3. We are basically good people but are overwhelmed with worldly anxiety and the lure of riches.

In his book on Prayer, Ron Rolheiser expresses our hectic life best. He compares our busy lives to that of going through a car wash. "When you pull up to a car wash, you are instructed to keep your motor running, to take your hands off the steering wheel, and to keep your foot off the brake. The idea is that the machine itself will suck you in. For most of us, that's just what our typical day does to us --- it sucks us through. We have smartphones and radios that stimulate us before we are fully awake. Many of us are texting friends, checking Facebook and e-mails, watching the news, or listening to music or talk radio before we even shower or eat breakfast. The drive to work follows much the same pattern: stimulated and preoccupied, we listen to the radio, talk on our cell phones, and plan the day's agenda. We return

home to television, conversation, activities, and preoccupations of all kinds.

Eventually, we go to bed, where perhaps we read or watch a bit more TV. Finally, we fall asleep. When, in all of this, did we take time to think, to pray, to wonder, to be restful, to be grateful for life, for love, for health, for God. The day just sucked us through.” pp. 1-2 Prayer, Our

Deepest Longing, Ronald Rolheiser.

Parents, god parents, members of Corpus Christi. We live in a secular world that can suck us up like a car wash. But we can choose to live differently. Make sure you prepare your soil to receive the Good News of Jesus Christ. Life is short. Our sister, Esther Nzoma lived but 65 years. This daughter of a preacher prepared her soil well. She bore fruit. There were over 800 people at this Kenyan immigrant’s death, all praising God for her good works. The Word of God is freely given. The only question is on what kind of soil will it land? Make your soul ready to prepare to receive Good News.