



St Angela Merici (21 March 1474 – 27 January 1540) was an Italian religious educator. She founded the Company of St. Ursula in 1535 in Brescia, (later the monastic order of Ursulines) in which women dedicated their lives to the service of the Church through the education of girls.

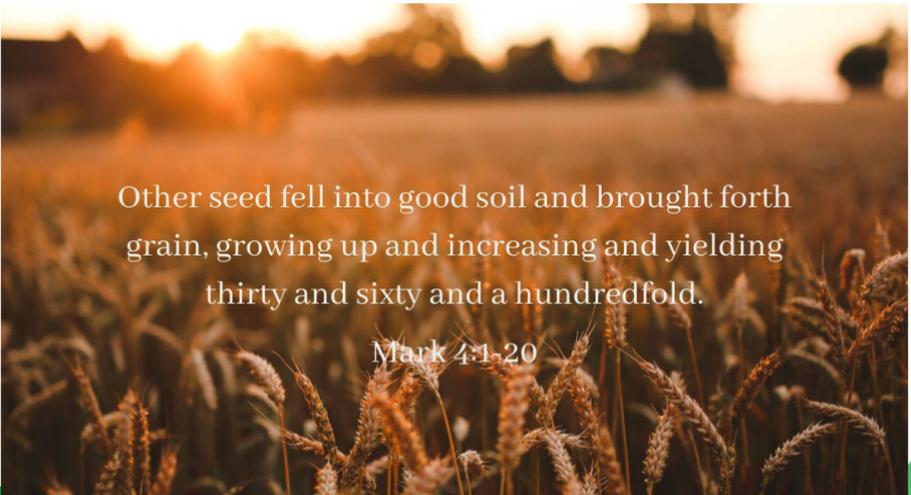
First Reading: (*Heb 10:11-18*) Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Ps 109:1-4

R. / You are a priest for ever, a priest like Melchizedek of old

Gospel: (*Mk 4:1-20*) Jesus began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a

boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed

A photograph of a field of golden wheat at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the field. The wheat stalks are in the foreground, slightly out of focus, while the background shows a line of trees and the setting sun.

Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.

Mark 4:1-20

hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven." And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown; when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word which is sown in them. And these in like manner are the ones sown upon rocky ground, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no root in

themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns; they are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown upon the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

REFLECTION

Today's parable, of the sower or of the soils, revolves around the point: how we listen to God really matters. First, we must consider the sower who sows the seed. The sower is anyone who sows the word of God, starting with Jesus at the most foundational level – who is Word himself -- reaching up to you and me. The one thing that stands out with the sower is his generosity with the seed, throwing it everywhere, unmindful of the type of the soil. Second, the problem does not lie in the "seed" as all of them had the potential to produce fruit. Third, each type of the soil is representative of the state of the heart and mind of the hearers: hard and dry, shallow and rocky, crowded and anxious, or soft and open. Accordingly, some revile the word, some reject it and some receive it. This parable, then, is not merely a story of a sower sowing seed. We are invited to see ourselves as both the soil and the sower. We are called, on the one hand, to sow the seed to everyone, everywhere, all the time. Our job is not to judge whether a person will receive it or resist it and thus waste our time. **The parable is both a challenge and a warning!** The Lord is challenging us to look at our heart today remembering that it oscillates between being different types of soil. And it warns us therefore about our responsibility to remain alert and open so that God's grace can find root in us and bring the fruits he wants.