

**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 17, 2017**

There is something magical about planting a seed. It is an awesome thing to make something come to life. It's very mysterious because we don't understand it. Last year when our youth group sold pumpkins for Halloween, a deer came to my front door and ate one of the pumpkins. As a result, there were seeds left on the ground and now, go over and take a look, there is a pumpkin vine with a large blossom on it, growing just to the right of the parish office door.

It's fun to watch things grow. How much more so, the excitement of a little child. Or the unpredictability of a teenager, or the creativeness of parents as they negotiate a minefield of life, or seniors gingerly negotiating their way with the newfound freedom of retirement and the complexity of health issues.

Life is very dynamic, always changing, with surprises and adventure at every corner. The parable of the sower and the seed is a poetic presentation of the lavish nature of life given to us by God. Seed is very expensive. Usually, a farmer has to go to the bank and borrow money in order to buy seed. There is huge risk, and lots of work, so the farmer is very careful in how he plants his seed. But in the gospel the seed is thrown about with reckless abandon. This is God at work, showering the world with life, blessing us all.

I have been reading a book called, *The Great Reformer*. It is about the life of Pope Francis. One of the characteristics of the Pope is the way he would associate and make friends with the most unlikely people. Usually it would be those who are very poor or those disregarded by everybody else.

The Church is always talking about evangelization, spreading the good news. A lot of people look at this as a promotion of self-interest. It makes the church look good when there are lots of people coming to church.

But Pope Francis shows us that evangelization is a process of enjoying one another. It's fun to watch things grow. It's invigorating and exciting to be with people and watch them grow. This is especially true with the poor and marginalized.

The gospel tells us that large crowds came to listen to Jesus. They were hungry to hear the creator of life. The strongest characteristic of anything or anyone who is alive is our strong desire to live and to grow. Why is it that we are so content with mediocrity or lack luster living. We seem to grab on to things that stifle life rather than enhance it. Drugs, junk food, aimless and mindless media, filling our stomachs, heads and hearts, our time, with worthless, lifeless pursuits, and then we wonder why we are empty or unhappy.

Make it a decided effort to go out and enjoy one another. Watch them grow and join in the excitement and vitality of true living. Give special preference and attention to people who are least likely to receive any attention. And you will see how the seed that you plant will produce 100, or 60, or thirtyfold.