

15 Ordinary A 2008
St. Mary, Siloam Springs, AR

I often tell parents that one of their main jobs in raising children is to sow seeds of wisdom in their minds. And like with all seeds, you don't see the fruit or the flower immediately. Well, that's just the way it is with the wisdom you share with your children: often you don't see the lessons you teach them bearing fruit until much later. Heck, sometimes they don't learn the lesson until after you're dead and looking down at them from heaven! I'd like to share with you a few seeds of wisdom that I remember hearing from my parents while I was growing up; and by the way, they're finally starting to bear fruit! Better late than never, right?! My father often said: "The family that prays together stays together." Today, I believe that with all my heart and I encourage families to take time to pray daily: prayer will heal or save their family life. Or, take another example: as little kids we often didn't want to eat our supper and played with our food. I remember my mom often saying: "If you finish eating before I stop washing the dishes, I'll wash your plate, too. Otherwise, you'll have to wash your own." Boy, that got us eating fast! Another lesson my parents taught me was to study first and then play later. And that's what I do today: I work on my homily or read a book before going out to see a movie. I bet each of you can think of those seeds of wisdom your parents shared with you that – I hope! – are finally beginning to blossom. Parenting is often about just planting seeds.

In the gospel today Jesus tells His famous parable of the sower and the seeds. But the interesting part of the gospel is that Jesus only explains the meaning of the parable to His disciples; He doesn't actually explain it to everyone. Why? Well, because Jesus is only sowing seeds of wisdom in the minds of the people, but, with His disciples, He wants to teach them **how to sow**. In other words, He wants them to understand that their job as apostles is to sow the Good News in the hearts of their hearers. And so, He explains to them why some seed bears great fruit in some people, but other seed only bears minimal fruit in other people. But their job is just to sow. You see, just like parents have to sow the seeds of wisdom in their children, and then hope and pray it bears fruit, so the apostles sow seeds of salvation in their hearers, and then hope and pray for good fruit.

A recent phenomenon here in the United States is home-schooling. I understand that there are a number of families here at St. Mary's who are home-schooling their children. Now, I would never suggest to a couple that they should home-school; I wouldn't want to put pressure on them. But on the other hand, I greatly admire the parents especially the mothers, who home-school their kids. (Quite frankly, I also sometimes wonder if they're a little crazy.) You know, when I think about what they do everyday, I feel like taking care of 3 parishes really isn't all that bad! But why do parents choose to home-school? Well, there are lots of reasons, but I believe that one fundamental and over-riding reason is that they want to be the ones sowing the

seeds into the minds of their children. You see, they don't want a society that often lacks Christian values to sow its seeds of secularism and atheism into their kids; they want to sow only good, gospel seeds in their hearts and minds. And don't you know, there's a much better chance that those seeds will bear great fruit!?

Folks, let me ask you: what are the seeds that have been sown into your minds that are now bearing fruit? Some times there have been more seeds sown by T.V. shows and movies than by the Bible and the Catechism. Try this little test. Which can you remember first and faster: a line from a movie or a verse from the Bible? I rest my case. Now, let me also ask you: Who is planting seeds in the minds of your children? Often parents abdicate their proper role as the primary educators of their children to school teachers or Sunday school catechists. Now, God bless our teachers and catechists, but they are not the primary educators of our children; parents are. I'll give you one scary and startling example where no one should replace the parents: who is teaching your children about sex education? Are you forming their conscience by teaching them God's plan for human sexuality, or are they learning about the "birds and the bees" from movies, friends and "Yugio" – whoever that is! Or, let me put it to you this way: where did you learn about sexuality? The point is, either parents plant seeds in their children, or someone else will. And those seeds, sooner or later, will bear fruit.

Folks, I am a pretty poor gardener. I just use a lot of Round-up to keep the weeds under control. But even I know that we reap what we sow. Sow good seeds in the hearts of your children, so that one day they will be like that fertile soil that Jesus describes in the gospel, that "bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty-fold."

Praised be Jesus Christ!