

Rev. Toan Do
Isaiah 55:10-11
Romans 8:18-23
Matthew 13:1-23

15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Epiphany Catholic Church
Louisville, KY, USA
July 12, 2026

I hope you can recognize what this is (holding large aluminum bowl). I have about four of them in two different sizes. This is the larger one, and I use it for water for my adopted son Lu. And there's a smaller one, lower. I use it for food. This morning because of the black mold here (pointing to the bottom), and it has been outside, I washed it with my hands several times to get rid of the mold, even used bleach on it. It didn't go all the way, but it's clean enough that I can hold it like this. <laugh>

Many of us remember, if those who are here in Kentucky, or at least in this area, ten days or two weeks ago, we experienced very high heat. It went as high as 95 Fahrenheit. And the heat index, I was told, it could go up to 105 to 110. On the other hand, on the East Coast, the temperature, like in Boston and New York City, it was 102 plus heat index. So here in Kentucky, it was still a little bit better to some extent. However, the humidity here was very high. On top of the weather of the high heat, we also experienced a lot of rain, and we have had some floods around. Someone just told me today that their house was flooded. Insurance did not cover it. We all have to go through this. A lot of folks here in Kentucky had to go through a lot of anxiety about it because of what has happened.

I noticed, as you may or may not heard the story yet, my dog, my adopted son, because of the breed, he's an outdoor animal, nocturnal. He stays up at night, sleeps during the day and watches the house. But in the last couple of weeks, because the heat has been so high, he moans at night. And so I allowed him to go inside. Also during the scorching heat during the day, I also put this outside the house where the priests live. There's a little deck, and I put it out there with water. And one night, I usually fill the water about halfway through because of not wasting it. The next morning, I would always change the water and wash it. I noticed that from the night, and he was inside, but I put it up there. And by the morning, because of the rain, it almost filled to the brim of the bowl. And because Lu happened to be inside for the next several days because of the heat, I also noticed that from the brim, after two, three days with the sun and the high temperature, the water dropped down. We

all know what that is. Evaporation. Today, in the first reading from Isaiah, the author speaks on behalf of God's mouth and says to the people that just as from the heavens, the rains and snow come down and do not return there until they have water on the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats. So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth. The author, Isaiah, used the image or a natural word imagery to speak of God's creation and God's power who takes care of everything. Even the smallest part of the world or the smallest part in our lives, from water that comes down from heaven, fills the earth. As many of us, or any of us here who visit Epiphany for the first time, I cannot stress enough how beautiful our campus is, especially during this time. It is green. And sometimes we call it blue grass because we are in Kentucky. But see how beautiful our landscape and our campus here is, because it's the summertime with rains and heat, evaporation and humidity that feeds the grass to be so beautiful, so blue and so green, the trees as well.

But as we also know from our understanding of biology and physics, water also evaporates after feeding the grass, after it nourishes the trees, it evaporates and the wind blows that air or water, and it goes to a different part of the land outside here in Anchorage and does the same thing. The image that Isaiah used in the first reading today speaks to us in the way in which, metaphorically, of course, but in ways in which God nourishes us and feeds us with the meaning of life through scripture. The word scripture reminds me of the gospel reading today for Matthew. From this week, next week and the following two or three weeks, we will continue to listen to a number of parables from Jesus in this gospel. But in today's gospel, particularly, there are two things or two parameters that we listen to and we can see. One is that the parable of the sowers talks or relates to scripture. And the second parameter is God. The first one speaks to us in the sense that scripture seems to relate to us that all things have been planned for or predestined or part of God's plan for salvation. Everyone, those who don't listen, those who first listen and lose the meaning of life, those who take the word of God through the mouth of Jesus, through the parable of the sower, the seed, the meaning of God's life permeates that person and that person produces fruit through, for example, doing the good work of God in this life for others who are less fortunate than we are. And in this sense, everything that we live on and nourishes us or lives on is part of God's plan for salvation. And of course, scripture, or the parables, seem to tell us that some people, even at the end of their life, still did not recognize the true meaning of life.

But at the end, as we see, Jesus leaves a big window in the scripture in this parable of the sower, namely, God is the one who has the final say. But to us this day when

listening to this parable, when listening to the passage from Isaiah, we are encouraged. We are called to hear the word of God and make it fruitful, make it grow in our hearts and come out with fruit through our actions, through our charitable works. Paul told the Romans today that creation, he used the same image, creation has always been groaning for the salvation of God because creation is part of God that makes it the way it is. It always yearns for the living word of God as grass yearns for water and sun and heat; trees the same. Our heart, our mind, and also our body, also yearns for the meaning of life. Yearns for the final salvation that has been planned for us.