

Dearly Beloved,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

July 19, 2026, Eighth Sunday after the Feast of Pentecost

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Exodus 3:9-15, Job 23:1-7, Jeremiah 7:21-25, Isaiah 52:1-8
- NT: 1 Peter 2:6-10, Hebrews 4:14-5:5, Holy Gospel St Mark 4:1-20

Holy Gospel: St Mark 4:1-20

4 Again he 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. ²And he taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³“Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it had not much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil; ⁶and when the sun rose it was scorched, and since it had no root it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸And other seeds fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” ⁹And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

¹⁰And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him concerning the parables. ¹¹And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; ¹²so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand; lest they should turn again, and be forgiven.” ¹³And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵And 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. ¹⁶And these in like manner are the ones sown upon rocky ground, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; ¹⁷and 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.^[a] ¹⁸And others are the ones sown among thorns; they are those who hear the word, ¹⁹but 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. ²⁰But 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.”

Reflections:

In the Parable of the Sower, the seeds represent the Word of God. The Sower could either be God or anyone who preaches the gospel. Jesus wanted to alert the crowd to be careful about where they would sow seeds. If not sown on good soil, would the seeds grow? Or was Christ urging them to become good soil so that His Word when sowed in them would be received properly and the word would be planted and grow well.

Jesus says in Gospel of Matthew: 7:6 "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."

The Word of God was compared to pearls, seeds and good soil. Mary the Theotokos was the perfect example of one who kept herself as the best soil to receive the Word that became 'flesh' in her. She

had the freedom to explore different ways of life. However, she assured her availability to receive the messenger of God and her readiness to take up the mission of delivering the Messiah. She did not need a second thought on this and did not ask for extra time to make up her mind.

Prior to joining Jesus, the disciples had their own priorities and choices, likes and dislikes, wishes and dreams. After joining Jesus, they unlearned their old ways and trained themselves to serve in the ministry alongside Him. They proved that although they were initially seen as unlikely candidates for the world's biggest mission, through sheer grace and following Him, they were being perfected into fertile soil for the Word to grow and spread until the ends of the world.

The Book of Acts narrates beautifully as to how the apostles found the right soil to sow the word. They went to cities and gatherings to spread the word. Cornelius was a high-profile man. How miraculously he was found and how well he received the word! Lydia was a businesswoman who flourished in wool trade. Her house became a home church. When Peter preached, it was not one soul, but five thousand men who accepted Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer. This great convention coincides with the miracle of the bread that fed five thousand men, by the Lord while he was preaching the word. What a miraculous sowing of seeds by the Eternal Sower! The Samaritan woman was a single hearer of the Word. She turned out to be a preacher to the whole town immediately, on her return home from the well after meeting Christ. With the apostles' ministry, every other day there were new joiners to the church. Such a miraculous multiplying of the word was happening.

The Word was in the beginning since creation's first step. The Word was with God. The Word came to the world. The Word became flesh. The Word was seen by the world in human form. Christ broke Himself to feed His faithful, to nourish the Twelve first, and the whole human race later! As His disciples, we are called to receive the Word daily, to let it take root within us, and to sow it faithfully. We have been given the responsibility to sow the word in the right soil too.

We live by the Word. We proclaim the Word. We are nourished by the Word. Each parish should become a powerhouse to serve the Word. Each gathering should delight in breaking and feeding the Word. Word is God. We experience Him in everything we do. We are His disciples in the current world to serve His Kingdom. May we be empowered by His Spirit receive the Word, live the Word, and proclaim the Word, so that many more may come to know and follow Christ.

FEASTS AND REMEMBRANCES:

- **July 15, Commemoration of St Kuriakose & Marth Uthiy**
- **July 15, Mar Abahai of Nicaea**

Upcoming Feasts & Events:

- **Saturday July 18, KCEF Ecumenical Celebration of St Thomas Day**
- **August 01-15, Lent of Theotokos and Feast of Dormition**

Parish Picnic went well. Sincere thanks!

Our Church picnic was well participated by our members. A good number of members have registered and several of us could attend it. It was a pleasure to bond with each other as we played games, had tasty food, took pictures and challenged our competitive sides in the spirit of fun and

togetherness. Hats off to the organizers and volunteers who painstakingly took efforts to ensure our safety and entertainment. We look forward to more such times ahead.

Pray for Peace in the Middle East and Gulf

We are glad to hear about the peace agreement. We hope for peace and continue praying for peace and concord. Our prayers may work miracles through the Holy Spirit. May the governments and leaders join hands to reconcile and to bring an end to the war.

Attention Please:

Parking: Please be considerate while parking our vehicles, only park at designated space. Leave reserved lots for the intended and kindly park within lines and markings leaving enough space for others to open their doors without scratching or hitting nearby parked vehicles.

AREA PRAYER MEETINGS: Upcoming Prayer meeting schedules shall be updated soon.

FOR OUR ATTENTION & TO NOTE:

Children, please occupy front benches during our Liturgical Services.
Kindly avoid crowding at the back of the church.

A few concerns:

For assuring safety and undistracted worship space, we request all our members to proceed to the front rows except those that are reserved for children when we enter the temple. It could be uneasy for our volunteers to guide them to the front during the service as it might cause distraction and noise. We avoid crowding at the entrance and stair areas due to safety concerns.

Please be considerate of our senior members to help them find seats or while they try to access the washroom. A slip or a hit should be avoided in any circumstance.

Please be watchful at the shoe rack area, which is also the entrance to both washrooms.

We request our parents to attend to our children not to pull the alarm lever at the back wall.

Hand Waving Machine & Common Absolution Prayer for all communicants

A hand-waving machine has been installed at the church entrance to record the number of communicants. Those who wish to receive the Holy Communion are requested to wave their hand once at the machine upon entering the church.

Please note that the machine will be deactivated after the recitation of the Nicene Creed.

Absolution will be administered during the morning prayer.

WEEKLY IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

July 19, Sunday – in-person meetings/Events

. OCYM Monthly Meeting after refreshments

LIVE streaming: All services are Live Streamed and are available.

Holy Liturgical Text for this Sunday

We will be using the Taksa of Mar Ksothos this Sunday.

May the Gracious Lord keep us from all evil and heal the entire world.

Next Week

July 26, 9th Sunday after the Feast of Pentecost

Scriptural Readings:

- OT: Deuteronomy 4:1-6, Job 23:1-7, Proverbs 13:1-7, Isaiah 24:1-5
- NT: Acts 28:11-22, 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, Holy Gospel St Luke 14:7-11

Yours in Christ

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