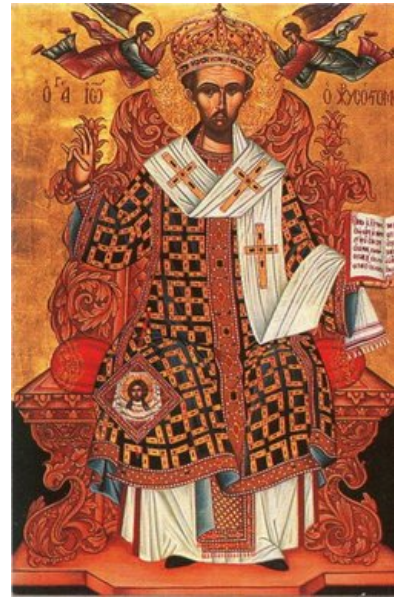


**Sexagesima 2008**  
**(St John Chrysostom)**

*“But that on good ground are they who, in a good and very good heart,  
hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.”*  
(Luke 8.15)

It is clearly obvious that the “Sower” who went out to sow his seed is Jesus Christ; and we must be amongst those who hastened out of the cities unto Him. Let us bear in mind that we must first know the “Sower” Jesus Christ, for it is only by knowing Him that we can have the necessary good heart – and very good heart – that listens to and accepts the Word of God. Our Holy Father tells us that: “Prayer really is being in silent inward communion with God. It requires nourishment, and that is why we need articulated prayer in words, images or thoughts; the more God is present in us, the more we will be able to be present to him when we utter the words of our prayers ... Praying actualises and deepens our communion of being with God. Our prayer can and should arise above all from our heart, from our needs, our hopes, our joys, our sufferings, from our shame over sin, and from our gratitude for the good. It can and should be a wholly personal prayer.” That means we should in that holy silence listen carefully to what God is saying to us and be ready to obey and put into practice what He tells us to do. In that matter God will never tell us to do anything that is contrary to the teaching of the Church or the practice of the Faith.



At Fatima, the Blessed Virgin called upon us to persevere in virtue — that is all part of prayer; and on 13 September 1917 she asked that we continue to pray the Rosary — “a form of prayer accessible to everyone, great and small, rich and poor, wise and ignorant; everyone of good will can say the Rosary every day.”<sup>1</sup>

Sr Lucia goes on to say: “Prayer is the basis of the Spiritual life. If we give up praying, we deprive ourselves of that supernatural life which comes to us from the meeting of our soul with God ... It is not that God is far from us; we are the ones who distance ourselves from God and lose the sense of His presence. It is for this reason that the message urges us to persevere in prayer, or in the words of the Message — to continue to pray to obtain the end of the war. Clearly at the time the Message was referring to the First World War which was afflicting the people just then. But the word war also stands for many other wars going on all around us and which we must help to bring to an end by our prayer and self sacrifice. I think, too, of the wars

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<sup>1</sup> Sr Lucia

waged against us by the enemies of our eternal salvation: the devil, the world, and our own carnal nature.”

“In the silence of the heart the Lord speaketh.” It is necessary that we learn and develop being in silent communion with God. Now we know the meaning of communion: com means “with” and union means “to be at one with”. St Benedict tells us that the Psalms and Canticles form the great prayer book of the people of God of the Old and New Covenant — they are the words that the Holy Spirit has given to us, they are God’s Spirit become word. We thus pray “in the Spirit”, with the Holy Spirit. When we pray the Come O Holy Spirit we ask almighty God, “Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the Light of Thy Holy Spirit”, that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in the consolation of the same Spirit. That is where we find the “inward silence of the heart”. Our hearts and minds must be at peace — undisturbed by anything outside the supernatural; our minds and hearts raised to the things of heaven so that we truly appreciate the immense truth: “And the Word was made flesh and dwells amongst us.” The shepherds of Bethlehem could not rest until they had discovered “this word that is come to pass”; they searched until they found Him. What is our attitude when we repeat those words in the Angelus three times a day?

In his homily on today’s Gospel, Pope St Gregory says: “Do you quibble with the voice of Truth itself? It is Christ, God with us, who explains the parable of the ‘Sower’ especially for us.” One of the greatest obstacles to “inward silence of the heart” is dissension of any kind — not being in communion with him who is “Truth itself”, thus rendering our prayers of no avail.

Saturday next is the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin — the Presentation of the 40-day-old Christ in the Temple. Holy Simeon “came by the Spirit” into the Temple and falling to his knees adored the Child, and blessed God for the gift of that inward peace of soul, “because mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples a Light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel.” Let us turn earnestly to our Blessed Mother with a genuine request for that revealing Light and the gift of “inward silence of the heart” that He brings to those who are one with Him.