

## *Wednesday, 3rd Week in Ordinary Time*

**According to ChatGPT, Pablo Picasso, when asked about the meaning behind his works, once said: “Everyone wants to understand art. Why not try to understand the song of a bird? Why does one love the night, flowers, everything around one, without trying to understand them? But in the case of a painting, people have to understand. If only they would realize above all that an artist works out of necessity.”**

**Jesus, after cleverly improvising his spectacular parable of the sower, and probably feeling quite full of himself, took some solitude. But then, some of the Twelve interrupted him. We don’t know who or how many. Mark was kind enough to spare them that everlasting embarrassment. “Excuse us,” they said, “but what does it mean?” They didn’t understand the art.**

**Jesus rolled his eyes, got over his exasperation, and patiently reviewed the points of the parable. In Mark’s gospel, the disciples are especially obtuse; this passage offers a prime example. The very question, “What does it mean?” illustrates the parable. Some seed of Jesus’ word was not falling on good soil.**

**What is true of words is also true of music. Not all of it takes root. When you compose one piece, it may fall on the path of self-criticism, where your judgment, like birds, swoops down and eats it up. Another piece may fall into the hands of a publisher where the soil of their marketing team is not deep. Your hard work may wither away for lack of roots. Another piece may fall on the thorns of indignation, where people in pews disdain it for being unsingable and, well, “new”. But another piece will fall on rich soil and produce fruit—not just royalties, but a source of inspiration that increases a community’s faith by thirty, sixty or a hundredfold.**

**What is true of words is also true of music. Keep sowing seed. The sower in Jesus’ parable was not successful 100% of the time, but that did not discourage him from strewing the seed to produce a crop to feed his family.**

**In this parable, there is no success without considerable failure. The sower accepts the reality that not every flick of the wrist will produce an abundant crop. But he has to sow a lot of seed so that some of it may bear fruit.**

**Picasso says an artist works out of necessity. You compose because something inside you insists on getting outside you. Writing it is satisfying. The pleasure of the artist does not depend upon the pleasure of the viewer. Expressing the mystery is enough. Sowing the seed is enough. And sometimes, but not always, that music bears fruit.**