

## Father Dave's Weekly Homily

07/10/11 ..... 15 A

-- My first assignment as a pastor was at two parishes which were highly agricultural. I can remember talking to some of their farmers about the harvest. Several of them remarked how, in the end, the results of their harvest were all up to God.

-- These were people who planned well. They cultivated the soil, put on just the right type of fertilizer for their crop. And they'd always complain about the weather: too dry, too much rain, not raining at the right time. Yet they knew they were dependent upon God for their very livelihood.

-- I'm sure many of you know what I'm talking about. And I'm sure many pastors could learn a lesson or two from those farmers who know their utter dependence upon the Lord.

-- Once there was a younger minister who was talking to a very successful pastor who had grown his congregation and had a young, lively community. He wondered what was the key to his success.

-- The older pastor responded, *Joe, you have to know what is in your control and what isn't...and there isn't really that much that is in your control.* He knew the prospering of his parish was not his own doing. Most of it was due to circumstances he didn't create.

-- Now, this flies in the face of our American resolve that we can do anything we set our minds to do. But it fits in well with the message of the familiar parable that Jesus tells in our gospel.

-- Notice how the farmer sows the seed in a pretty random manner. That may not be good agricultural practice, but it's often how the circumstance of our lives come at us—in a pretty random manner.

-- God is generous and pretty indiscriminate in throwing out his grace. And not all of it produces good fruit. But that doesn't matter. Jesus' story doesn't concentrate on the lost seed. It highlights the

overwhelming harvest which comes from the seed that does produce good fruit.

-- There are so many things we cannot control about our lives. And if we try to control what we can't, we go crazy. Our task is to sow the seeds of love...do what we can where we are... and leave the rest up to God.

-- I can't, for a moment, think that I can come into St. Caspar's as the Savior of the parish. There's only one Savior...and that certainly isn't me! Of course, God expects me to use my gifts as best I can in serving your parish, and he'll demand an accounting for that.

-- Each of us can be tempted, in our own way, to think that everything depends upon us. That's really a subtle manner of putting ourselves in God's place.

-- We all have responsibilities in life, and we all have gifts God has given us to help meet those responsibilities. We should use them well. But there comes a point where we must turn things over to the Lord, who is really in charge of everything.

-- God has given us the assurance that his love and grace is always there. The prophet Isaiah said it beautifully when he compared God's word to the rain that waters the earth and produces good fruit.

-- At this point in time, many of us (especially our farmers) are starting to pray for physical rain for the crops that have been planted. But we should also be immersing ourselves in God's word, through prayer and reading of scripture, so we can be nourished by the Lord.

-- Then we will begin to sow the seeds of love...in our families, at work, in the community and our parish. And God will not disappoint us. The harvest will be greater than we can imagine.