

In reflecting on the gospel, immediately John Chapman came to mind. I learned about him early in life...perhaps as many of you did. His nickname was Johnny Appleseed. He was a pioneer nursery man and introduced apple tree orchards in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and northern West Virginia in these United States. His legend and the legend I learned, was that he would gather large numbers of appleseeds and spread them throughout his travels, bringing the trees all over. He was depicted in story as a nomad, who joyfully and randomly spread his apple seeds wherever he traveled.

What I didn't know was that he was also a missionary for what is called the New Church. So he spread apple trees and the gospel wherever he was.

Matthew's Jesus also tells the story or parable of a farmer who went out to sow...on footpaths, on rocky ground with little soil, among thorns and also on good ground, where it sprouted. Jesus' parable is about God's word, which is planted in us. And the challenge to us is to be good **soil**...that bears much fruit.

Isaiah's parable is also about God's word. It flows down like the snow and rain upon us. It will achieve the end for which God sent it. Again it is up to us to be "Johnny Appleseeds" of faith in spreading God's word over all the earth, wherever we are. The legend of Johnny Appleseed and the gospel proclaimed, point the way for us to spread God' word by providing the soil, the dirt, and nurturing its growth in ourselves and **for** others.

Paul ties together God's word proclaimed today: **"Indeed, the whole created world eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God."** And that is our mission...to be Johnny Appleseed in proclaiming God's word. I am struck by Paul's optimism...that hope in God's word coming to fruition in us...it will spread as we live our lives for others.

I saw a television blurb the other day that told just how important trees are to cooling the earth. It mentioned the cooling effect of one large tree and spoke about it in terms of the immense power of air-conditioning that one tree generates.

Pope Francis, in his first Encyclical "Laudato Si" says that our care for all the earth is important and a vital part of the proclamation of the good news (God's word) that is passed on through our lives to touch the lives of others. He says, "St. Terese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile, or any other small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms."

May we BE and BRING the gospel, the good news to others and all creation. It is our destiny. How are you doing out there as you travel your journey in life? That is the question today and really EVERY DAY as we go about our living and loving.