

## SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY

Gospel: Saint Luke 8: 4-15

Three kinds of disobedient religious

### 14.1 First Point

In a community the superior's word is like the seed in today's Gospel. It is heard by three kinds of poorly-disposed persons. The seed that fell on the road<sup>110</sup> is the word of a superior received by those who have only a weak desire to obey. They seem to have some liking for obedience; they speak well of it on occasion and even urge others to practice it. But all one really discovers in them is a kind of good will which has no real consequence, because they find everything they are asked to do very difficult. They cannot bring themselves to practice obedience, and, in fact, they don't. This is because their heart has not been prepared ahead of time. To secure their compliance, the superior, before commanding them anything, first has to prepare them so that they will like what he is asking them to do.

Are you not of this number? Are you always ready to obey? Be prepared in your heart to obey, so that your superior is able to call on you at any time with full confidence, knowing that he will find you always ready to do what you are asked.

### 14.2 Second Point

The seed that fell on stony ground<sup>111</sup> is like the word of a superior received by those who do what they are told only when they experience no disturbance or trouble in obeying. At the slightest temptation, the merest difficulty of spirit, or the least annoyance felt toward their superior, they become upset and cannot make up their minds to do what he has ordered, because they are not solidly grounded in virtue and have not been sufficiently exercised in the practice of obedience. Ah, how important it is that such persons, weak and subject to temptation, be thoroughly exercised in obedience, and that persons of this character be contradicted and tested!

Often ask your superior not to allow such weaknesses in you, and ask God to give you an everdocile heart.

### 14.3 Third Point

The seed which fell among thorns<sup>112</sup> is like the superior's word received by those who obey in everything they like and in which they find nothing difficult. But if they feel any repugnance toward what they are told, they cannot bring themselves to do it because they are unable to overcome themselves and do the violence to themselves that the occasion requires. To bring them to obey, the superior has to ask them to do only what they find agreeable; before venturing to give them an order, he needs to study their temperament and their inclinations.

This sort of obedience is entirely natural and human; in consequence, there is nothing religious about it, nothing meritorious before God. It obliges the superior to ask his inferior what he wishes to do; whereas, it is the inferior who ought to say to his superior, What do you want me to do?<sup>113</sup> This is how you should always act if you wish to be truly obedient.

<sup>110</sup> Lk 8:12

<sup>111</sup> Lk 8:13

<sup>112</sup> Lk 8:14

<sup>113</sup> Acts 9:6