

By Pat Haggerty

For the past few weeks I have been vacationing at the New Hampshire shore. It has been wonderful, and we have been truly blessed with fantastic weather! Perhaps one of the best things about being at the ocean is that it is so easy to reflect. There is nothing to compare to a long walk on the beach with the warm breezes blowing, the sun shining and the cold water on your feet.

It is easy for me to reflect on God's goodness and marvel at His creations. The power of the ocean waves reminds me of God's strength. The cycle of the tides is synonymous with the constancy of God. The blueness of the water is a symbol of the generosity God, which He pours out to us daily.

What happens when this vacation ends? How will I continue my reflections without the aid that the ocean has provided me? I don't mean to imply that I can't reflect without the ocean, but it has served as an amazing vehicle of inspiration for me. Everyone has their "happy place" where nature provides a support and a means of wonder. It may be something other than walking the beach. It might be sitting by a placid lake or breathing in the clean air during a mountain hike. Other than nature, the best place for reflection is sitting before the tabernacle.

It is not important where one reflects. The important thing is that we do it! The gospel for the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Times speaks to the importance of accepting God's word and living it. When Jesus shares the parable of the seed that is sown He is advising us of the value

of his message. “Hear then the parable of the sower. The seed sown on the path is the one who hears the word of the kingdom without understanding it, and the evil one comes and steals away what was sown in his heart. The seed sown on rocky ground is the one who hears the word and receives it at once with joy. But he has no root and lasts only for a time. . .The seed sown among thorns is the one who hears the word, but then worldly anxiety and the lure of riches choke the word and it bears no fruit. But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.” (Matthew 13: 20-23).

Let us use our time for reflection wisely---no matter where we are. We could be at a beautiful beach, a calm lake, a breath-taking mountain, in a church, or even in our own rooms. The place is inconsequential. What is essential is how we incorporate God’s word into our daily lives; how we absorb His message; how we infuse His teachings into our relationships with others.

Be the one who has the rich soil and welcomes the seed, the Word of God.