

The Divine Folly of the Sower who “sows in the dark”

The parable of the sower, narrated in the Synoptic Gospels, is a powerful and foundational image of the Christian message. At first glance, it might seem a simple allegory about the different reception of the Word of God. However, upon deeper inspection, it reveals a radical truth, especially when applied to educational and pastoral processes.

This truth is contained in the very gesture of the sower, a gesture we could define as “sowing in the dark”; an act of immeasurable, seemingly inefficient generosity, which defies the human logic of outcome and control.

The core of the reflection does not lie so much in the four types of soil, but in the figure of the sower and his action. He goes out and scatters the seed with a broad, almost reckless gesture. He does not conduct a preliminary mapping of the field, does not select the most promising plots, does not carefully avoid stones or thorns. He sows everywhere. This is not the technique of a modern farmer who aims to maximize harvest by optimizing resources. It is, rather, the representation of a divine logic, a logic of abundance and unconditional giving.

Transferred to the educational and pastoral sphere, this gesture unmask one of our greatest temptations, that of efficiency and measurable, immediate results. The educator, the catechist, the priest, the parent, are often plagued by the “calculating farmer syndrome.” There is a tendency to invest time and energy where a promise of return is glimpsed: the brilliant student, the devout parishioner, the most responsive youth group. Unconsciously, there is a risk of neglecting the “road” of hardened hearts, the “stony ground” of ephemeral enthusiasms, or the “thorns” of complicated and suffocating lives. The parable tells us, instead, that the

seed of the Word, of care, of knowledge, of witness, must be cast everywhere, without calculation and without prejudice. "Sowing in the dark" means, first and foremost, acting out of pure gratuitousness, driven not by the probability of success, but by an unwavering faith in the value of the seed itself. It is love that makes no distinctions, that offers itself to all because it is not an investment, but an overflowing gift.

Secondly, "sowing in the dark" reveals a profound truth about the humility of our role. The darkness is not only the indifference of the sower to the quality of the soil, but also the impenetrable mystery that is the human heart. The educator and pastor cannot "see" into the soul of another. They do not fully know the past wounds, the hidden fears, the unconscious resistances that make a heart hard as a road or shallow as a thin layer of earth. They cannot predict what worldly concern or what new passion will choke a good intention.

Acting in this "darkness" means accepting not having control over the growth process. Our task is to sow, not to make germinate. Growth belongs to a mysterious dynamic that involves the freedom of the person (the soil), the intrinsic power of the seed (the Word, love), and the action of Grace (the sun and rain that do not depend on the sower). This awareness frees us from two opposing but equally harmful burdens: the arrogance of those who feel they are the architects of others' success and the frustration of those who feel responsible for failure. The educator who sows in the dark knows that their work is essential but not omnipotent. They offer, propose, accompany, but ultimately withdraw respectfully before the sacred enclosure of the other's freedom, where the true encounter between seed and earth takes place.

Finally, "sowing in the dark" is an act of radical hope. Why does the sower continue to scatter the seed with such generosity, even knowing that much of it will be lost? Because his trust is not placed in the efficiency of his gesture, but in the inexhaustible vitality of the seed. He knows that, despite the roads, stones, and thorns, the seed has within

itself a power of life capable of producing fruit “thirty, sixty, or a hundred times what was sown” wherever it finds even a small patch of good soil.

This is a fundamental lesson against the cynicism and weariness that can assail those who work in the educational and pastoral field. Faced with apathy, indifference, or hostility, the temptation is to stop sowing, to conclude that “it’s not worth it.” The parable invites us, instead, to shift the focus from the response of the soil to the quality of the seed. Our task is not to obsessively worry about the harvest, but to ensure we sow good seed: an authentic word, a credible witness, a patient love, a solid culture.

The hope of the sower is not vague optimism, but the certainty that Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, if offered with generosity, possess an inherent force that, sooner or later, in a way we cannot predict or control, will find a way to germinate.

In conclusion, the parable of the sower frees us from the tyranny of immediate results and introduces us to a spirituality of action founded on gratuitousness, humility, and hope. “Sowing in the dark” is not a blind or naive action, but the most realistic and fruitful act possible, because it is based on the reality of a God who gives without measure and on the mystery of human freedom. For the educator and pastor, this means loving without expecting rewards, teaching without claiming to shape, witnessing faithfully without the anxiety of seeing the fruits. Perhaps, the first and most important fruit of this generous sowing is not what grows in the field, but the transformation of the heart of the sower, who learns to act and love with the same divine, generous, and hopeful “folly.”