

Reverend Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (GALL - oh - dett) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in late 1787. His father was personal secretary to US President George Washington when that office was located in Philadelphia.

At the age of 13, his family moved to Hartford, Connecticut. He studied at Yale, earning both a bachelor and a masters degree. He also pursued seminary studies and became a Congregationalist preacher.

His plans to become a professional minister were side-lined when his neighbor, the father of a nine-year old deaf girl, asked him to travel to Europe to study methods for teaching deaf children.

Gaullaudet went on to co-found the American School for the Deaf in 1817. And in 1864, his son Edward went on to found the first college for the deaf which in 1986 became Gallaudet University.

Today is the 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time, and in the Gospel we hear the familiar “Parable of the Sower.” Over the next couple of weeks, we will hear seven more parables contained in this thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel.

This particular parable, the “Parable of the Sower” is also found in the gospels of St. Mark as well as St. Luke.

Despite its inclusion in three of the four Gospels, each of the three tellings of the parable has a unique ending.

In today’s reading from St. Matthew Jesus admonishes that “[w]hoever has ears ought to hear.” While in the fourth chapter of St. Mark we are told to “[t]ake care what you hear.” And in the eight chapter of St. Luke’s gospel, Jesus says: “Take care, then, how you hear.”

From these three tellings of the “Parable of the Sower,” we are given three similar, but different instructions. Not only are we to hear, but we need to be careful what we hear, as well as how we hear.

In Jesus’ explanation of this parable to His disciples at the end of this section of Scripture, He explains what each of the different seeds represents. And what they represent are those who do not understand God’s Word, those who fail to abide in God’s Word, or fail to persevere for a variety of reasons.

The seed that produces *“is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”*

It is only through a solid relationship with the Word of God ... that is, Jesus Christ ... the Word made Flesh ... can we ever hope to move beyond mere listening ... to actually hear God's Word, and know what we are hearing, and how God's Word is to be utilized and acted upon in our own lives.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray that our hearing today of God's holy Word may not fall on deaf ears. May we have ears to hear Him ... minds to understand and follow His Will ... and hearts to love Him ... so that we might truly follow Christ and through His grace, and mercy, and love ... bear abundant fruit ... that will last.