

# Creating a Spiritual Environment

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Hatour



# Recap



- ▶ 4 types of hearts and their response to God's word
- ▶ Those that limit growth and bearing of fruit
  - ▶ Careless heart
  - ▶ Superficial heart
  - ▶ Preoccupied heart
- ▶ The one that promotes growth and fruit = Sincere Heart
  - ▶ Received the word
  - ▶ Understands the word
  - ▶ Retains the word
  - ▶ Practices the word

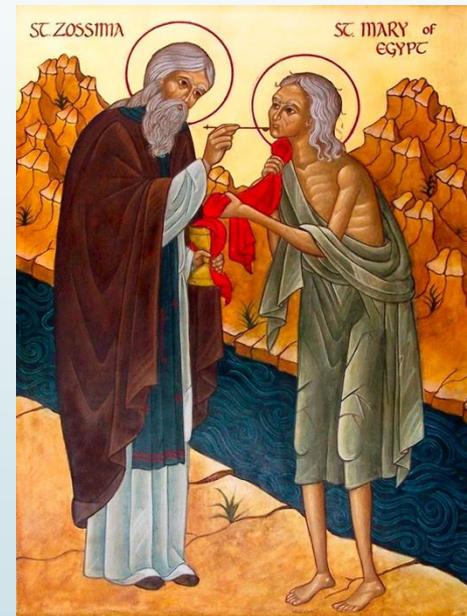
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# Our Environment or Surroundings

- ▶ Are of two types
  - ▶ Those we can control
  - ▶ Those we do not
- ▶ The Lord addressed both of these types in the Lord's Prayer:
  - ▶ "...do not lead us into temptation..."
  - ▶ "...But deliver us from the evil one."

# The Surroundings we choose...

- ▶ EX: St. Mary of Egypt
- ▶ EX: Abraham
  - ▶ “And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.’” (Jos. 34:2-3)



# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 1. Wayside

► The seeds on the wayside were:

- Trodden
- Devoured by birds

► The Serpent with Eve

- “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” (Gen. 3:1)





# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 1. Wayside

- The seeds were unprotected
- “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.” (Prov. 4:23)
  - “Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life.” (RSV)
- EX: Solomon

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# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 1. Wayside

- Keep watch of your senses
- Be watchful of the traps of the enemy
- Beware of the gradual drifting away
- “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” (Heb. 2:1)
- **Key = GUARD your heart**

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# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 2. Rocky

- ▶ Problem: Lack of moisture
- ▶ There must be a connection to the source of Life
- ▶ Solitude is the place where we connect with God
- ▶ “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” (Matt. 6:6)



# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 2. Rocky

*“Solitude is not a private therapeutic place. Rather, it is the place of conversion, the place where the old self dies and the new self is born, the place where the emergence of the new man and the new woman occurs.”*

(Henri Nouwen)

**Key = CONNECT to the source of life**



# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 3. Thorny

- ▶ This is the company we choose for ourselves.
  - ▶ Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” (1 Cor. 15:33)
- ▶ EX: Lot in Sodom
  - ▶ “...for that righteous man [Lot], dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.” (2 Pet. 2:8)

# Ingredients for a Healthy Spiritual Environment

## 3. Thorny

► EX: Solomon

- “As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD, as the heart of David his father had been.” (1 Kings 11:4)





# Summary



- ▶ We mention 3 ingredients, you can control, for a healthy spiritual environment
  - ▶ GUARD your heart
    - ▶ Set boundaries
    - ▶ Keep watch of your senses
    - ▶ Be watchful of the traps of the enemy
    - ▶ Beware of the gradual drifting away
  - ▶ CONNECT to the source of life
    - ▶ Spend time with God in solitude
  - ▶ COMPANY matters
    - ▶ **Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” (1 Cor. 15:33)**