

[1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49 Luke 8:4-15]

Do we wonder enough about the amazing fact that we exist? Not just exist: we are *conscious* creatures who can reflect on what we are; where we come from and where we might be going, in the end. In Luke's parable, Jesus sees us as the ground, the earth into which seed is thrown. Each of us receives the seed in different ways.



What is the seed that is sown in us? It is stories we heard, most likely when we were children, about God. People told us stories about Jesus; that he was God. We read the gospels for ourselves and heard many pretty dull homilies commenting on them! But there was fire hidden in the Word! It made sense of life. The stories told us that God is our Father, a conscious being far greater than ourselves. We cannot describe this God, who caused everything we know: the sea; the mountains; the human race. Even the billions of distant stars. If we were lucky, we came to understand how this fitted with the science we learned: science told us *how* things work; God was the reason *why* they exist.

And this God is our friend. When other people weren't friendly, or we were lonely, God could be trusted as a sure friend, living in our heart; unfailing love.

But this wonderful news was a fragile treasure. Sometimes other things made us forget it: the hard work we had to do; the things we worried about; the things we enjoyed. Sometimes people scoffed at us for believing in God, and we doubted. Sometimes we were just too tired, or too lazy, to talk to God.

But when our mind and heart were clear, what a joy it was: Jesus, God who came among us, promises that our friendship will never end! We have eternal life!

In the gospel Jesus calls us the soil in which the seed is sown, but in St Paul's letter we are the seed itself. Paul's community was worrying about what happens to us when we die. Death is *our* biggest challenge too. Paul told his people the amazing truth: our body dies and is buried, but just as a little seed of rice or wheat, when buried, turns into a fruitful plant, so we become something quite different.

On the road to Damascus, Paul had seen Jesus, risen, beyond death. Paul tells us that in the end we ourselves will pass through death into a totally new state of being. Our conscious self, with all that we know will not perish; nor will the loving relationships in our hearts. Don't we Christians talk to our dead every day?

It is interesting that for about 300 years the wisest scientists have looked at the world as if it were made only of material stuff: chemical elements and bodies moving around mechanically. They mostly ignored the mystery of our mind, or said that consciousness was somehow produced by our brain-cells. But the amazing advances in the last 100 years have got scientists puzzled: they can see that chemical and mechanical explanations are not enough. Consciousness is somehow connected with the deepest workings of the tiniest particles of matter. They are finding too that consciousness can go on when the brain is temporarily dead. Some scientists are even wondering about an infinite mind, behind the universe.

So the sciences are touching on what Jesus and St Paul told us: that the human person is deeper than it seems; and at the end of our mortal life the seed of knowledge we have received will bear fruit in a new stage of life.

We have no idea what it will be like to leave time and space behind, but the Word of God promises us that we shall be like God, and see God 'face to face'.