

# THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

## Word Growing

The word, alive and active, carrying out what it is sent to do; the word a seed scattered, with its own destiny and its own story; the word hidden, awaiting its time: these are all images of the word of God given to us in the Scriptures.

### The Speaking Of The Word

This is an act of God - it wouldn't be *his* word if he didn't speak it. The word is a divine word, but it is addressed to the world, and particularly to the human world. It is the divine word which generates the light, and forms the heavens and the earth, and makes the world fruitful in species and in humanity. In the gift of our reflective mind, our intelligence, God has prepared us in a special way to receive his word. And so we find that we are a part of the seed-bed, in which the word is sown. I think there is something very specific in this metaphor of sowing, which can help us to see ourselves in a new light.

### I'm Expecting

These, if you like, are words which are used by those who have welcomed a sown seed (otherwise known as mothers). Their lives do not wait for the birth of the child before they begin to adapt, and transform, in the ways that will make ready the huge event that is coming. Soon everyone who meets them will know they are "expecting" (you'll be able to tell at forty paces). And the old phrase "in an interesting condition" comes to mind: suddenly there are stories and secrets to share, experiences to compare, endless questions to ask and answer. Now think of that as a metaphor for the response we give to God's word. It is sown in us simply by our creation (*by your word the earth brought forth*), and in the way we are made up God reveals himself to us. In the word spoken over us in Baptism (*you are my child, on you my favour rests*) the work of our creation is affirmed. In the Scriptures, in the Sacraments, we find ourselves addressed by God, called by our name, formed to serve him and know him. *But we know him so little.* The God who is our beginning and end is too great to be entering under my roof. So I know that his great revelation lies in the future, which is unknowable now, and will one day be known. So I am truly in a state of transition, of wakening slowly to the news, of growing into the truth. I am like someone coming towards a birth. I know that the seed has been sown, and that's absolute: just as you can't be *somewhat* pregnant.

I know that the future will be transfigured when the time comes. But what the details will be I can't, and perhaps shouldn't, imagine. They are designed in God's mind, and my mind could only distort them and diminish them.

### The Word In Us

So there is our paradox. There's something within us growing, which is divine. It's infallibly present, yet it belongs to the future, coming in its own time. We didn't put it there and can't judge it. Unable to say where it will take us, we can't ignore it without losing our way. It isn't ours, yet it defines us beyond our power to know. Sometimes it seems echoed in our very nature, and to be the heart of peace in us; another time it will seem completely alien, and demand an obedience that feels like the death of us. Since before we were born or thought-of, it has stood in the heavens: when at last we are judged it will ring in our ears. The chief virtue we need in order to receive the word of God is surely *hope*, which enables us to accept all truth with confidence, because we live in covenant with the eternal God, and that means the future is friendly to us. So this word which God has spoken holds the key to the future, and can be what the letter of Peter says, "a lamp for lighting the way through the dark, until the dawn comes, and the morning star rises in your minds." Then we shall be alive in full light.

*Fr Philip*