



*On the mountain height of Israel
I will plant it.
It shall put forth branches and bear fruit,
and become a majestic cedar.
EZEKIEL 17:23*

JOSEF HANUS/SHUTTERSTOCK

To What Shall We Compare the Kingdom of God?

Today's readings are rich with answers to this question posed in Mark's Gospel. The prophet Ezekiel selects the metaphor of a cedar tree. Like such a tree, the kingdom of God begins as a tender shoot planted on a high mountain where it can grow unimpeded by other growth. There it will grow tall and firm, boasting many branches, rich with fruit, the home to various species of birds. The Gospel writer chose another metaphor—that of a small seed. This parable characterizes the inconspicuous nature of the kingdom's origin. We may not see it in the beginning because it is so small and surrounded by soil, but it contains within itself the force of life that someday will burst forth into a rich harvest.

The mustard seed is a special kind of seed. Today's Gospel calls it "the smallest of all the seeds on the earth" (Mark 4:31). However, following the pattern of growth that is hidden in the core of its being, it also brings forth one of the marvels of nature, producing "the largest of plants" (Mark 4:32). Metaphors also underscore the fact that these seeds must first

transform, lose the appearance of a seed in order to rise, filled with the mysterious character of its growth. All of this happens quietly, unpretentiously, as if under the cover of night.

These are very moving metaphors, quite easy to understand and envision. However, the reality for which the metaphors stand is sometimes very difficult to realize because of human selfishness. Still, it is God's tree, God's seed, God's kingdom, and it is God who declares: "As I, the LORD, have spoken, so will I do!" (Ezekiel 17:24).

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ *What about these metaphors gives you comfort and encouragement?*
- ★ *How do you contribute to the health and growth of the kingdom of God?*

Upcoming Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>OLPH</i>	<i>Saint Boniface</i>
<i>June 12 / 13 Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>	8:30 am ~ Confession 9:00 am ~ Mass	5:00 pm ~ Mass
<i>Tuesday</i>	NO Mass	
<i>Thursday</i>	5:30pm ~ Mass	
<i>June 19 / 20 Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>	8:30 am ~ Confession 9:00 am ~ Mass	5:00 pm ~ Mass

	<i>OLPH Mass 9:00 am</i>		<i>ST. BONIFACE Mass 5:00 pm</i>	
Date	June 13	June 20	June 12	June 19
Lector	Mandy Hall	Matthew Davis	Jerry Nowak	Mary Jo Leygraaf

Mass Intentions	OLPH	St. Boniface
June 12 / 13	Poor Souls in Purgatory	† Virginia White
June 19 / 20	† Charlotte Boggs	† Libby Balenovich

Our Gifts	OLPH	St. Boniface
June 5 / 6	\$245.00	\$270.00

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I

Ez 17:22-24

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I, too, will take from the crest of the cedar,
from its topmost branches tear off a tender shoot,
and plant it on a high and lofty mountain;
on the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it.

It shall put forth branches and bear fruit,
and become a majestic cedar.

Birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it,
every winged thing in the shade of its boughs.

And all the trees of the field shall know
that I, the LORD,

bring low the high tree,
lift high the lowly tree,

wither up the green tree,
and make the withered tree bloom.

As I, the LORD, have spoken, so will I do.

Responsorial Psalm

92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praise to your name, Most High,
To proclaim your kindness at dawn
and your faithfulness throughout the night.

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

The just one shall flourish like the palm tree,
like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.
They that are planted in the house of the LORD
shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

They shall bear fruit even in old age;
vigorous and sturdy shall they be,
Declaring how just is the LORD,
my rock, in whom there is no wrong.

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

Reading II

2 Cor 5:6-10

Brothers and sisters:

We are always courageous,
although we know that while we are at home in the body
we are away from the Lord,
for we walk by faith, not by sight.
Yet we are courageous,
and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord.
Therefore, we aspire to please him,
whether we are at home or away.
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,
so that each may receive recompense,
according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia.

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower.
All who come to him will live forever.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mk 4:26-34

Jesus said to the crowds:

“This is how it is with the kingdom of God;
it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land
and would sleep and rise night and day
and through it all the seed would sprout and grow,
he knows not how.

Of its own accord the land yields fruit,
first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.
And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once,
for the harvest has come.”

He said,

“To what shall we compare the kingdom of God,
or what parable can we use for it?

It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground,
is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth.

But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants
and puts forth large branches,

so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.”

With many such parables

he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it.

Without parables he did not speak to them,

but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

Gospel Reflection

In the cryptic message of the prophet Ezekiel, long centuries before the Lord's coming, God gave His people reason to hope. Ezekiel glimpsed a day when the Lord God would place a tree on a mountain in Israel, a tree that would "put forth branches and bear fruit." Who could have predicted that the tree would be a cross on the hill of Calvary, and that the fruit would be salvation?

Ezekiel foresees salvation coming to "birds of every kind"—thus, not just to the people of Israel, but also to the Gentiles, who will "take wing" through their new life in Christ. God indeed will "lift high the lowly tree," as He solemnly promises.

Such salvation surpasses humanity's most ambitious dreams. And so we express our gratitude in the Psalm: "Lord, it is good to give thanks to you." It is indeed good, and better still to give thanks with praise. The Psalmist speaks of those who are just upon the earth, but looks to God as the source and measure of justice, of righteousness. Like Ezekiel, he evokes the image of a flourishing tree to describe the lives of the just. The image, again, suggests the Cross as the measure of righteousness.

The Cross is a sign of contradiction to those who would rather "flourish" in worldly terms. As St. Paul emphasizes to the Corinthians, we need courage. Our faith makes us strong, and it is proved in our deeds. He reminds us that we will be judged by the ways our faith manifests itself in works: "so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil."

God Himself will empower the works He expects from us, though we freely choose to correspond to His grace. In the prophetic oracles, He scattered the seed that sprang up and became the mustard tree, large enough to accommodate all the birds of the sky, just as Ezekiel had seen. He gave this doctrine to His disciples in terms they were able to understand, and He provided a full explanation. In the sacraments He

provides still more: the grace of faith and the courage we need to live in the world as children of God.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray to end Abortion, Russell Brooks, Cassie & Clifton Centers, Maere Tekanene, Bill Moses, Jerry Roberts, Donna Blevins, Norma Wilson, Dennis Parks & Family, Erica Davis, Chris & Amanda Decker, Marian Colette, Debbie Moses Haggins, Rose Grant, Sandy Hurts, Dominic Cureton, Todd Morris, Alex Woods, Christopher Braden, Bonnie (Warfield) Bishop, Sister Alice, Curt and LeeAnn Hall, Jay Baird, Gary Hackler, Gail Willis, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Bisceglia, loved ones who are ill, Brody Beavers and family, Shawn Lee Day, all those of our families who are affected by Covid-19, Jessica Davis, and Harold Couch.

UPCOMING SAINTS AND FEASTS

The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary ~ *Memorial*

June 12

Saint Romuald, Abbot; BVM

June 19

Our Lady of Perpetual Help & Saint Boniface

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Dear Padre,

I care for my mother, who has dementia. I was active in my parish, but now I hardly have a minute to spare for prayer, much less helping out at church. I'm getting very depressed. What should I do?

I have several ideas. First, make your prayer life part of your mother's routine, and you'll find it easier to fit prayer into your day. People with dementia find it soothing to listen to repetitive prayer, so consider praying the rosary aloud in her presence. Sometimes people with advanced dementia can still remember and recite the Our Father and the Hail Mary, so you could end up praying the rosary together. That would truly be a gift.

Next, try reading aloud Scripture stories from a youth Bible. They'll be easier for her to understand than passages from an adult Bible, and you'll get some time with God's word.

Last, but absolutely not least, it's important for you to be connected. If your parish has a parish nurse, he or she can help you find respite care, in which someone takes your place with your mom so you can get away for a while, or

a caregiver-support group where you can talk with other people in your situation. If your parish doesn't have a nurse, your diocese can give you the same information.

Remember, attending to your spiritual health doesn't just help you—it helps your mother, too.

Fr. Patrick Keyes, CSSR
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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

How often do we see a man or woman arrive at work with a weary face, with a tired countenance and, when we ask them, "What happened?" they answer: "I only slept two hours because we are taking turns at home to be close to... our grandfather, our grandmother"....These are heroic deeds, the heroism of families!

GENERAL AUDIENCE, JUNE 10, 2015

Calendar

Monday

JUNE 14

Weekday

2 Cor 6:1–10

Mt 5:38–42

Tuesday

JUNE 15

Weekday

2 Cor 8:1–9

Mt 5:43–48

Wednesday

JUNE 16

Weekday

2 Cor 9:6–11

Mt 6:1–6, 16–18

Thursday

JUNE 17

Weekday

2 Cor 11:1–11

Mt 6:7–15

Friday

JUNE 18

Weekday

2 Cor 11:18, 21–30

Mt 6:19–23

Saturday

JUNE 19

Weekday

2 Cor 12:1–10

Mt 6:24–34

Sunday

JUNE 20

Twelfth Sunday

in Ordinary Time

Jb 38:1, 8–11

2 Cor 5:14–17

Mk 4:35–41

Daybreaks inspires during our Church's holiest seasons.

Leading Catholic voices inspire the faithful with daily reflections & prayers for Advent and Lent. Including: Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Dr. Mary Katharine Deeley, Sr. Dianne Bergant, Fr. Paul Turner, and more at Liguori.org.