

Planting Seeds
11th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)
(Mk 4:26-34)

In first Parable of the Seed, Jesus stresses how the growth belongs to God: *“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”* (Mk 4:27-28). Nevertheless, the farmer has a role to play, because unless he sows seed, there will be no harvest.

In the Kingdom of God, the harvest of salvation is due to God’s grace and power, and not man’s effort. Nevertheless, God does not save man without man’s free cooperation in the work. We must *“scatter seed on the land”* (Mk 4:26), and we do this in several ways.

In the first place, we evangelize by proclaiming the Gospel. We must preach God’s word as the apostles did, share our faith, explain our religion. *“Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you”* (1P 3:15). Though not everyone is a trained apologist, every follower of Christ should know the basic tenets of the faith and be ready to give personal testimony. We do not have power to change or convert another person, that is God’s role, but is it given to us to plant the seeds. This upcoming week we should look for the opportunities to share and explain our faith to someone, starting within our household, even if in a small way.

Related to this, we plant the seeds of the Gospel every time we speak the truth and confront lies. Truth comes from God, and brings light. Lies come from the devil and create darkness. Truth has its own innate power. Again, it is not necessary to prove the truth, or be preoccupied with agreement and acceptance. The parable simply stresses the need to say the truth. With so much manipulation, distortion, and outright deception taking place in our society, we have abundant opportunity to sow the seeds of refreshing truth. Sometimes, we don’t even have to state what the truth is, all we have to do is call out the lie.

A third important way of planting seeds is by *“doing good.”* Even those who feel insufficient to teach the faith or speak up against falsehood, can find ways to express kindness, mercy, and graciousness. These are also seeds of the Gospel, and with God’s grace they will change people in time, *“we know not how.”*

The second parable of the Mustard Seed takes the lesson of the first parable to another level. When God gives man a role to play by sowing the seed, even then it is a little role. In fact, Jesus seems to be challenging us not to focus on or attempt great deeds or grand gestures. Keep it simple and small, as small as possible like a mustard seed, seemingly insignificant, even unnoticed.

It is best to focus on the little things, which will be less likely to call attention to ourselves. Do good simply because it needs to be done, and seek nothing else by it. Speak the truth because obedience requires it. All the growth and glory must belong to God.

Therefore, in sowing the seeds of the Gospel, deliberately seek out the smallest ways possible. Then stand back and see whether or not God works a tremendous miracle as the land yields, “*first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear*” (Mk 4:28).