

**Homily - Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time,
(The Kingdom of God is like a Mustard Seed)**

June 13, 2021

Most of us have planted a seed in soil at one time or another. Our task is to bury the seed and water it. The soil produces the growth. We wait, not thinking about how the seed sprouts and grows. This is the image Jesus uses in today's gospel to describe the kingdom of God. Jesus gives us two parables about farming: the parable of the scattered seed, and the parable of the mustard seed. These were images that the men and women listening to Jesus could relate to, since most of them spent their days in the fields planting, watering and reaping. Our Lord told these parables using something they knew - agricultural work- in order to teach them something they did not know about: the Kingdom of God! Indeed Jesus teaches something about his spiritual Kingdom. So the kingdom is now, the kingdom is for all, but especially the poor and the lowly- those who have accepted it with humble hearts. To live in the kingdom requires that we believe in God and are faithful to God's will.

The beginning of the gospel tells us of Jesus inaugurating his ministry by proclaiming the reign of God and calling all to repent and believe the good news. Jesus invites us to repent, to join him on the journey of conversion. He calls us to actively participate in the kingdom. Repentance, conversion, and participation are the fruits of Jesus' pursuing us and drawing us to himself. It is as if Jesus pulls at us constantly until we let go of that which holds us back. It is God's grace and unconditional love that beckons us.

Our first reading today from the prophet Ezekiel describes God's action of raising up the lowly tree, and then of making the withered tree bloom. This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus who established God's kingdom on earth. God intentionally reaches out to those who are sinners. To create the kingdom we must be open to God's word. In faith, the word is planted like a seed in our hearts where, by its own power. It grows until the harvest.

Saint Paul, in the second reading, reminds us of the fact that we are on a journey towards the kingdom of God in order to be with Christ our lord and king. The journey to this kingdom is a journey which must be approached with faith and courage. Hence Paul reminds us: "*...Going as we do by faith and not by sight, we are full of confidence...and actually want to leave this body in order to be with Christ.*" In light of this, we must advance diligently in order to be admitted into this kingdom by Christ.

How can we live in the Kingdom of Heaven to grow in us?

To live in the kingdom requires that we act on our faith. Faith without good works is simply not enough. Jesus shows us good works throughout the gospel, he heals the sick, cures the leper, casts out spirits, and feeds the hungry – all while sharing the good news. What is it that we do to act out our faith in the kingdom of God today? Parents and grandparents nurse sick children. Friends forgive and reconcile. We sacrifice some of our income, time, and talent for our brothers and sisters in need. We pray, teach, cook, clean, and care for others. In our workplace or place of worship we show respect and love for each person. The list goes on and on.

The point is that the kingdom is here and now. All that we do in our day-to-day living should consciously reflect to the world that we are God's people; that we are united in Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. If our actions are centered on Jesus then we are indeed a kingdom people.