

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

11th Sunday in
Ordinary Time, *B*
June 13, 2021

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor

Our Sunday Masses are now held inside the Church, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM.
Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing.

1st Reading:

Ezekiel 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

"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.

R.

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. **R.**

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. **R.**



2nd Reading:

2 Corinthians 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.

The Word of the Lord.

WE WALK
BY FAITH
NOT BY
SIGHT



2 Corinthians 5:7

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Lector: Alleluia, Alleluia.

All: Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

All: Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel Reading:

Mark 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."

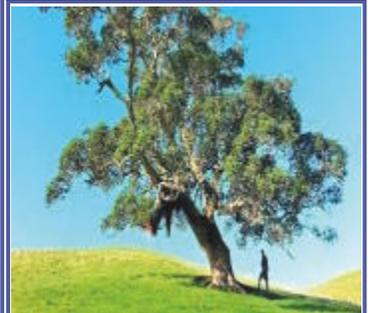
He said, "To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But

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."

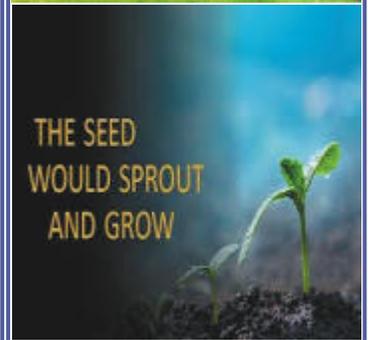
With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it.

Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

The Gospel of the Lord.



THE SEED
WOULD SPROUT
AND GROW



The Mystery of Faith:

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD . . . GUIDEPOSTS

IN GOD'S HANDS

The Easter season is over and we are back to ordinary time, the season characterized by anticipation and hope in the resurrection of Christ. Thus we are back to the color green for the next several months. Green is the standard color for "Ordinary Time." Green symbolizes the hope and life of each new day. It reminds us that our day-to-day life must be characterized by anticipation and hope in the resurrection of Christ . . . that we are an "Easter people."

It is the time to live the faith, to experience the working of the kingdom of God in our day-to-day life. Today's gospel reading uses the metaphor of the seed to help us understand the nature of the Kingdom of God.

The first parable of today's Gospel (Mk 4:26-29) points out the mysterious nature of how seed grows. Once the seed is sown, its growth is out of the hands of the Sower. The Sower may be cultivating the soil in which the seed is sown and watering it, but he has no idea how the seed actually grows. This is how the kingdom of God grows.

This parable reminds us that a man's faith is a gift from God and not a necessary result of our proclamation of the faith to him. As Christians it is our mission and responsibility to proclaim our faith to others through words and actions. But whether or not people will believe and be converted is not our responsibility, it is God's. (This was the first lesson on evangelization that Peter learned which he conveyed to the other apostles at the First Council of Jerusalem. See Acts chapters 10 and 11 and 15 — upon the instruction of the Holy Spirit Peter went to the house of Cornelius the pagan to proclaim the faith and he realized it was the Holy Spirit that converted Cornelius).

The second parable of today's Gospel — the parable of the mustard seed (Mk 4:30-34), points out that the Kingdom of God does not dawn upon the earth fully developed. It takes time, and it most often begins in small, seemingly insignificant ways.

Translated into day-to-day life: One person forgives another; one person reaches out in love to someone who feels unlovable; one person trusts God in the midst of suffering. It is in these small things that God's love is experienced, and love is contagious. A person who is loved then loves others, and that person loves still others, etc., until God's reign conquers hate and evil and fear.

Or the following oft-quoted experience of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta may bring the message home:

"Once when reporters encircled Mother Teresa, one called out, "Mother, you are seventy years old! When you

die, the world will be the same as it was before. What has changed after all your effort?"

Mother Teresa smiled brightly and responded, "Well, I never thought I would be able to change the world! I have only tried to be a drop of clean water in which God's love could sparkle. Does that seem little?" An attentive and emotional silence had fallen among the reporters.

She started to speak again and asked the cheeky reporter, "Why don't you try to be a drop of clean water, and then there will be two of us. Are you married?"

"Yes, Mother."

"Tell your wife as well and then there will be three of us. Have you any children?"

"Three children, Mother."

"Tell your children too and then there will be six of us . . ."

Trust in the Lord

Trust in the Lord also underlies all of today's readings.

In the first reading **Ezekiel** prophesied during the time of Israel's exile. In the verses prior to today's reading he was hard on the people, preaching that the unfaithfulness of the Jews was what led to their exile. Many had lost faith that God would care for them. But in today's reading we hear Ezekiel give a word of hope. He assured them that God would "lift high the lowly tree . . . make the withered tree bloom" (Ezekiel 17:24). The message: *keep trusting in God.*

In the second reading **Saint Paul** says we should "walk by faith, not by sight," *trusting in the Lord's vision* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Finally, in the gospel **Jesus** speaks to the crowd about seeds planted in the earth. We cannot see what is happening in the soil, but we trust that they will grow. Sure enough, eventually they sprout and flourish and become grain to be harvested or shelter for birds. *Trust in the Lord.*

Today's Gospel would certainly be a response for those who grow impatient with everything, even with God. Seeing so much evil around, the Covid-19, the slow progress in economic recovery, nagging problems about money, conflicts at home or in office, or even in the parish community, people complain: "Why does God not do something?" Some answers are provided in today's readings.

**GOD'S WAYS
ARE HIGHER
THAN OUR WAYS**

Or, simply—PATIENCE, ACCEPTING GOD'S TIME

Often we want to see extraordinary manifestations of God working in our midst. We want immediate results, a complete change of heart. But God does not force himself on human hearts. He wants a response of love. If we accept him and open ourselves to his grace, we will be transformed into new persons.

The first parable likens the kingdom of God to a farmer sowing seeds, and to the seeds sprouting, growing, and yielding fruits without the farmer knowing it. The farmer just waits. He has a built-in patience. The meaning is that as Christians, we must have *patience*.

The second parable likens the kingdom of God to a mustard seed that is so small but ends up big. This is an exaggeration, of course. We know that mustard plants are just shrubs, 35 to 40 inches tall, not trees like the cedar, but the point is: What God has started does not remain small. It will grow big. We must *patiently* wait for the fruits of every good deed.



NEXT SUNDAY

IS

FATHER'S DAY

NOVENA OF MASSES IN HONOR OF FATHERS

The novena of Masses in honor of fathers that Fr. George will celebrate will start on June 19 (Saturday) and running until June 27 (Sunday). To include your father, living or deceased, in the Novena of Masses, just pick up a Father's Day Novena envelope which you will find at the church entrance or in the pew pockets, write on the designated space the name of your father, put in the envelope a donation of at least \$10, then drop the envelope in the collection basket at one of the Masses next weekend.

Note: "When offerings are collected for a Novena of Masses, the provisions of the 1991 decree of the Congregation for the Clergy, *Mos iugitur*, are applicable. According to these norms, the priest is permitted to retain a \$10 stipend for each Mass offered during the Novena. Any amount exceeding the \$10 stipend for each Mass of the Novena is to be sent to the diocesan bishop as specified in canon 951, §1. In the Diocese of San Diego, Bishop McElroy has delegated authority to pastors to designate a charity of their choice as the recipient of the excess amount." *Your donation is your father's act of charity, especially to the receiving charitable institution which will express thankfulness through prayers for donors.*

Let us continue to pray for one another, asking the Lord to bless especially those parishioners who are in poor health and those who are encountering problems in their life.



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

CELEBRANT:

With God's grace we work to build up the kingdom of God in our world. Therefore, we turn now to God with our needs and the needs of our brothers and sisters.

LECTOR:

- 1) For the church: That it may manifest patience and hope throughout the world for the fullness of God's peace and justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, that they champion those who toil for justice and nurture peace so that the seeds of justice and peace may bloom and ripen the world over, let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For those whose faith needs nurturing, and for those who support them through prayer, teaching, encouragement or understanding, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For teachers, catechists, parents, and all who teach our children the Catholic faith, that the seeds they plant and tend may blossom and grow long beyond the time we spend with them, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

CELEBRANT:

God who brings all to fruition, we live in a time of planting, waiting, believing, and hoping. Give us the courage to move toward the future, even when we are unsure of the outcome. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. Amen.

Please Heed this Message from Bishop McElroy:

It is vitally important that all of us receive the Covid vaccine. The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are safe and effective. They are fully approved for use at this moment by the teachings of our Church. And as Pope Francis has so clearly taught, receiving the vaccine is not only for ourselves as individuals. It is for everyone that we treasure, to keep them safe and healthy and bring back the joy of life to us all.

..... The sooner we are all vaccinated, the sooner we will be able to return to the many joys of our lives that we have missed during this past year of suffering. The vaccines, with our continued masking and social distancing during the coming months, will bring this hateful pandemic to an end."



June 5-6
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