

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! / The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower; / all who come to him will live for ever. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 4: 26-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

The mustard seed, the smallest of all the seeds, grows into the biggest shrub of all.

Jesus said to the crowds: 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'What can we say the kingdom of God is like? What parable can we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.'

Using many parables like these, he spoke the word to them, so far as they were capable of understanding it. He would not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything to his disciples when they were alone.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL



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Breaking Open the Word

LIVE BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

The parables of Jesus have a marvellous way of giving us the feeling of having Jesus sitting beside us. They have always been able to cross barriers of time, space and culture. They have a power to delight and unsettle, to console and challenge that is undimmed with the passing of nearly 2000 years. They are deceptively simple and always invite further reflection. When Jesus spoke of the kingdom or reign of God he drew on the image of the mustard seed. In doing this he was able to speak of the hidden beginnings of God's reign and, at the same time, the certainty of its growth. This of course is where the parable is deceptively simple, and where its challenge is to be found. As in the time of Jesus, it is still difficult to believe in the certainty of the coming of the kingdom, especially when its growth continues to be hidden, and the hearts of many seem to remain unchanged.

It is precisely here that Paul's reflection on his life as a Christian in the first century can be a source of encouragement. While we can picture Paul's ministry as one of on-going successes, the reality was not so simple. Faced with rejection and misunderstanding from some of the community in Corinth he does not lose heart. Sometimes growth among them was hard to see but he keeps his eyes firmly on what lies ahead. He knows there are many times when we must have the trust to live by faith and not by sight.

Christopher Monaghan CP

THE SAVING WORD

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / B

13 JUNE 2021

FIRST READING

Ezek 17: 22-24

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

I have made the small tree great.

The Lord says this:

'From the top of the cedar,
from the highest branch I will take a shoot
and plant it myself on a very
high mountain.

I will plant it on the high mountain
of Israel.

It will sprout branches and bear fruit,
and become a noble cedar.

Every kind of bird will live beneath it,
every winged creature rest in the shade of its
branches.

And every tree of the field will learn that I,
the Lord, am the one

who stunts tall trees and makes the low
ones grow,

who withers green trees and makes the
withered green.

I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it.'

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESP PSALM

Ps 91: 2-3, 13-16. R. cf. v. 2

R. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

1. It is good to give thanks to the Lord/
to make music to your name, O Most High,
to proclaim your love in the morning/and
your truth in the watches of the night. **R.**
2. The just will flourish like the palm-tree/and
grow like a Lebanon cedar. **R.**
3. Planted in the house of the Lord/they will
flourish in the courts of our God,/still bearing
fruit when they are old,/still full of sap, still
green,/to proclaim that the Lord is just./
In him, my rock, there is no wrong. **R.**



SECOND READING

2 Cor 5: 6-10

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing the Lord.

We are always full of confidence when we remember that to live in the body means to be exiled from the Lord, going as we do by faith and not by sight – we are full of confidence, I say, and actually want to be exiled from the body and make our home with the Lord. Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it, we are intent on pleasing him. For all the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.

■ **The word of the Lord.**