

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time  
June 14, 2015  
Church of St. Leo the Great, Oakland, CA  
Preacher – Henry Ormond, O. Carm.

***Reading*** [1EZ 17:22-24](#)

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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*** [PS 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16](#)

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R. (cf. 2a) **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. **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.

R. **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.

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

***Reading 22 COR 5:6-10***

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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***

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**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

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

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

***Gospel MK 4:26-34***

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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.

## HOMILY

As we know, Jesus used parables to try to help people to catch glimpses of what the Kingdom of God is like. His great gift was to use everyday things that people were familiar with, but then were taught to see things in a new light. A farming people would have seen the seasonal miracle of seeds being sown and plants growing -- seemingly of their own accord.

Allow your thoughts and imagination to see how the growth of trees and plants might speak to you of the Kingdom of God and its growth and development in the world. There is no right or wrong answer. One of the beauties of parables is that each time you read or reflect on them, you are likely to come to a different insight --taking you deeper into the mystery of the Kingdom.

Think of the mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, growing into the largest of trees providing shelter and food for birds. The mustard seed really is a tiny seed that grows into a very tall tree.

What can mustard seeds teach us about the kingdom of God? The tiny mustard seed literally grows to be a tree which attracts numerous birds because they love the little black mustard seed it produces.

God's kingdom works in a similar fashion. It starts from the smallest beginnings in the hearts of men and women who are receptive to God's word. And it works unseen and causes a transformation from within.

Just as a seed has no power to change itself until it is planted in the ground, so we cannot change our lives to be like God until God gives us the power of his Holy Spirit. The Lord of the Universe is ever ready to transform us by the power of his Spirit.

This is one way we can understand Christ's parable of the mustard seed. When a person first opens him or herself up to receive God as Lord, the Lord rules very little of the person. And so the kingdom of God is like the littlest seed in the ground of the person's heart. But if only the person lets that seed grow in them, if only he or she doesn't give up on self as fruitless, that littlest seed of God's kingdom will grow and grow in them till it becomes like a great tree in them.

Are you ready to let God change you by his grace and power? The kingdom of God produces a transformation in those who receive the new life which Jesus Christ offers. When we yield to Jesus Christ, our lives are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. Paul the Apostle says, *"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us"* (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Do you believe in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit? Even a mustard seed's worth of the kingdom of God within you is enough for hope.