

Through this parable Jesus tries to calm the ardor of those who are in an undue hurry to trust in God. There are three things we can take away from today's gospel.

1. We can look at the end of the parable and see that the mustard seed becomes a tree that gives shade and shelter to the birds and food for the hungry, which implies that nobody grows up just for him or herself. None of us are isolated trees, living just for ourselves.

Jesus uses the image of a seed for a reason. After Jesus was crucified and they took him down from the cross, he was buried in a garden, like a seed. He came forth from that garden, as the largest of all possibilities, calling forth other seeds buried for eternal life.

In Jesus, and hopefully here at the Sacred Heart, we find comfort here in the shade of his love and in those around us and in the food of the Eucharist. Each one is called to grow, work, love and construct something beautiful from our lives both with others and for others.

Hopefully others who come here, may experience this from ourselves – a bit of shade, a bit of peace. We are all here to help one another find a way to heaven.

+There is a story of a very arrogant Rabbi that was greeted from a rather simple man, to which the rabbi replied with contempt, saying "Is everyone in this town as ugly as you?" To which the man responded, "Take that up with our maker, who gave me life." God does not make junk, we are meant to be here for one another.

2ndly, this parable invites us to have great confidence in the Providence of God.

Anyone who sows a good seed, anyone who commits himself to the betterment of the world, anyone who tries to bring up a child, for example, can count on the words of Jesus to overcome his or her momentary discouragement caused by the failures that he or she may be confronted.

Parents, grand-parents, teachers, who have the impression of having toiled for nothing, or at the moment, are confounded by your kids, can now look forward with eager hope to the Lord despite the modesty of their so-called results. Just keep sowing and trusting in God's grace.

+Believe me, there was a time in my life in which no one could easily say I had a vocation to the priesthood, but the seeds kept coming from my way and here I am. He is asking us to sow the seeds of love: "I love you son (some never hear this). I'm sorry. Forgive me. You look great honey. You are a wonderful daughter." Then trust in God for it to grow. By the same token, we can sow seeds of discouragement that can wreck one's life. That is on us.

Christ is asking us to have that same kind of patient faith, the faith of the sower to plant the seeds of peace, love, reconciliation, and justice wherever and whenever we can, that in God's good time, our plantings will result in the rich harvest of the kingdom of God here on earth.

The sower can calmly look at the grain that he is going to sow, and say as any parent: "Become what you are, become what God wants you to become!", or in other words, "Say, 'yes' to your vocation, become the ear swollen with corn or the tree with big branches, and also young

man, young girl, become what you are in God's dream, become His child, his sower. Sow his joy (smile), stand for truth (speak up), be his peace.

3rdly, this type of patience is what Jesus would call "mustard seed faith." It is the conviction that from the smallest acts of kindness, compassion, and justice, the kingdom of God will take root and grow.

+Thomas Jefferson commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to find the source of the Missouri River, and from there to discover a relatively easy water route west to the Pacific. Such a waterway, they discovered, doesn't exist.

But they did succeed in mapping the Northwest and, 15 months after they began pushing themselves upstream, they found, near today's Montana-Idaho border, the source of the mighty Missouri.

Lewis's journal records that on August 12, 1805, a member of the expedition, Private Hugh McNeal, "exultingly stood with a foot on each side of this tiny stream and thanked his God that he had lived to straddle the mighty and heretofore deemed endless Missouri."

The Missouri at its source looks a lot different than the powerful current that flows into the Mississippi River near St. Louis! And in the Kingdom, too, many great things start out small.

+As someone put it, "God never put anyone in a place too small to grow." The same is true in our Church life and our spiritual life. Our spiritual vitality begins with a trickle of water at Baptism. That is where it began with John Paul the 11, in his baptism. It grows with a wafer of bread in Holy Communion and a smudge of consecrated oil at Confirmation.

Slowly the graces planted through those sacraments can grow into a heroic and life-changing holiness that profoundly affects others:

When a parent teaches a child to make the sign of the Cross, when a religious education teacher struggles to hand on the truths of faith in our religious ed program, when a Catholic visit the sick, helps the homeless and counsels the doubtful, when we celebrate Mass and pray for the living and the dead, we are sowing seeds of the Kingdom.

Which of them will grow and at what rate is not for us to determine. The growth will happen in God's good time. We sow the seeds and God will give the growth.

The reward we will receive from the Lord is not for the growth but for the number of seeds we tried to sow.

We all want to look forward to a great future for our country, our parish, our family. If and when that will happen is not in our control. We should focus on the faithful seeding, the generous planting and leave the rest to God.

The mission of our generation may or may not be to harvest. The mission of every generation, however, is to do the planting.