

Theme of the Week - Mustard seed

Over the course of the last year, Jesus has referred to a vineyard on three different occasions. The first of the themes, *'I am generous'*, Jesus explained in the parable that the vineyard symbolized the people of God, and the owner is God Himself. The second theme, *'Produce fruit'* Jesus uses the parable of a landowner fencing off the vineyard and leasing it to tenants but when the landowner comes back the tenants keep the spoils for themselves. The Chief Priests and elders failed to realise that the Kingdom of God will be for those that produce fruit for the Lord, not to keep for themselves. The last was the week we celebrated St Joseph's day where Jesus explains he is the vine and God is the vine dresser. All three refer in some way to the Kingdom of God and the abundance of goodness and care that comes from it. In Sunday's Gospel Jesus uses the Mustard seed in his parable to illustrate the Kingdom of God. The seed does not rely on a gardener's constant attention - it is quite capable of growing wonderfully on its own, simply because it is a living seed. Whenever we sow the seed of God's love or God's Word in someone's heart, God will continue the work of growth there, using all the circumstances of that person's experience to develop the growing and goodness that can come from it.

The Gospel passage on Sunday seems to be a response to those who are discouraged as nothing seems to be happening. Jesus has explained the Kingdom of God on many occasions but here he needs to explain how the Kingdom of God comes about. (Could such small beginnings really be the start of and grow into a kingdom?) The image of the growing seed emphasises the helpless role of the farmer - the forces of nature working quietly away and mysteriously without any intervention from him. So the kingdom grows in people's hearts, in God's own way, whether we are aware of it or not. The greatness of the kingdom grows from a small beginning; its size can be compared to that of the mustard seed. It is for the benefit of all people; it is not the exclusive domain of any one flock; Acknowledged where Jesus says "birds of the air" within the Gospel. This was a traditional Jewish expression for the Gentiles - all the non-Jewish people. Compare the small beginnings of Jesus' ministry in Galilee with the spread of his message throughout the world and appreciate the vast growth that has taken place over the years. God's kingdom grows of its own accord, in its own way, often unseen.

The little seed of God's kingdom is someone opening themselves up to the possibility of God being real and active in their lives. Gradually it grows in them. Perhaps they ask more questions about God, or try to seek more meaning from the Bible, or go to church more often. Maybe they begin to talk more to God in prayer or seek help from God with questions about their lives. Possibly a verse from scripture hits home with a new and deeper meaning or perhaps there is a realisation that their life needs to change. Maybe they receive some special kindness from someone in a time of difficulty or sorrow. When we look at the Catholic Social Teaching of Stewardship, we can look at the Gospel above and other scripture as to what God has given us. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Genesis 2:15. Pope Francis say "Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home" Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 13 and "...the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us." Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* 159. Allow yourself to show the Kingdom of God to others so they too can see the wonders from a very small beginning but also grow it so all of our brothers and sisters can thrive from it.

Mustard seed

Weekly Reflections
16th June 2024



A reading from the Gospel of St Mark 4:26-34

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.

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father,

Open our eyes to the countless blessings and riches you have freely given us and help us to show our appreciation by being faithful stewards of your creation.

Loving Lord

Hear our prayer



Catholic Social Teaching of **Stewardship**

Stewardship is all about caring for the many gifts that God has given us. These can include our school, our homes, local community, the environment, our talents and all other resources.

All living things are connected so we must use God's gifts responsibly to meet the needs of everyone, now and for the future. Please watch the video on the next slide about Stewardship and reflect on how you can look after and share the gifts God has given us.

How can we be more:

**Active and
Curious**

Day 1

Why do you think Jesus uses the illustrations of vineyards and a mustard seed to explain the Kingdom of God?

Day 2

Sometimes we can become frustrated when we do not see instant reward for our faith. What does the mustard seed tell us about our Faith and our place in the Kingdom of God?

Day 3

Where do you see yourself opening up more to God's Kingdom in your life? How can you help to open the hearts of the children to the surprises and small beginnings of God's plan for their lives?