

June 14, 2015

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

"and the seed would sprout and grow, though he does not know how"

The Gospel today reflects on the growth and development of Faith. From what seems, at least based on our human senses, to be virtually nothing, that tiny mustard seed takes on an epic proportion.

This Gospel provides a time for true reflection.

Human life itself develops from living matter smaller than the smallest mustard seed.

God willing..... our son David, and our dear daughter in law Betty in Oxnard, California are expecting their first child together, the child being due to arrive in October

This news brings back memories of 35 years ago as if it were yesterday, when my dear Karen and our six weeks' premature, tiny, baby son arrived home from the hospital. That tiny baby that I could hold in one hand . ....will soon to be a father in his own right.

Betty, now very visibly a mother to be, was told repeatedly by her physician over the past few years that a genetic arthritic condition, would probably not allow for Dave and Betty to be able to have their own biological children ...

But it appears that our Lord God has a very different plan for them.

From the tiny mustard seed, that is David at his birth, and the tiny mustard seed of opportunity for Betty to give birth, comes the development of new life into the world.

Who can even question the power of Faith?

Jesus, the master teacher, often used parables as He shared the divine Word of His Heavenly Father with His disciples and the crowds that followed Him. "With many parables Jesus spoke the word to

them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when He was alone with His own disciples, He explained everything.”

A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Today's gospel actually contains two parables – both teaching about the kingdom of God.

The first parable, "the Parable of the Growing Seed" is the one on which I am focusing my homily today.

Jesus tells about a farmer who generously sows his agricultural seed. “Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, the farmer puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.”

As we “unpack” this parable, we see that Jesus is the Sower and the seed he sows is the incomprehensible, irresistible Word of our Heavenly Father.

The soil of our hearts receives the precious and powerful Word of God, which by His grace, creates faith. And faith, as it continues to grow, brings about the harvest of eternal life!

While we are the soil in whom the seed grows and brings about salvation, we also become the Sower of the seed. In other words, the faith which is firmly planted in us, grows, matures and is ready to be “replanted” in the hearts and lives of others as we share the love of God in Christ with everyone we know and even those we don't know.....how about that for a novel idea ?

Our human existence is based on Faith in God for life eternal, but also that God will help us solve our what may seem insurmountable problems in this life through creative use of our minds and energies.

For years we have been reading about our world heading for self-imposed disaster. One of these impending disasters is the fact that our oceans worldwide are suffocating from the effects of disposable plastic.

An official report in 2013 indicated that the annual cost to California alone is \$438 million. The report goes on to indicate that Plastic pollution affects every waterway, sea and ocean in the world. When we damage our water systems, we're putting our own well-being at risk.

As usual, the media has a field day...."bad news once again sells newspapers". .This is the big one...all living creatures in the oceans will be suffocated. If the world isn't financially bankrupted by the cost of the cleanup then the absence of food will be apocalyptic.

People are shaking in their boots and how on earth can even Faith in God survive these impending catastrophes ?

In the first parable today, while the seed does its wonderful work, the most important point of the parable which Jesus tells is all about the harvest – the harvest of souls and the expansion of His Kingdom. This, Jesus wants us to know, is what the kingdom of God is like.

In 2013, while the plastic hysteria was screaming at us from the TV screen and in newspapers, a young man in Delft Holland was completing his school science project. The young man had been diving in Greece and in his words "saw more plastic than fish".

The young man , Boyan Slat, at 16 years of age, while swimming through the plastic waste, conceived a unique approach using a relatively small boom , but utilizing the natural power of the ocean current to collect all the plastic waste.

Boyan Slat is now just 21 but his unique device is now being deployed worldwide. The new device will solve the pollution problem

at a miniscule percentage of the cost and time for traditional methods to "harvest" the plastic, which can then be recycled.

From the seed planted in the fertile mind of the young Dutchman emerges a God-given idea that seems destined to solve one of the world's greatest pollution problems. The resolve and God given energy of the young man and his conviction that the seed will grow into a unique idea in the world is indisputable evidence of the growth of God's Kingdom.

Who can even question the power of Faith?

The first thing we need to learn from this parable is of course that if we want to see God's kingdom grow, we must plant seeds. This is the most basic step toward a harvest. If we leave out the step of planting, no matter what else we do, we will never harvest a crop.

Jesus' parable goes on to make an equally important point. Yes, we must plant the seeds. But God is the one who makes them grow. In the parable, the man scatters the seed on the ground, but then, "Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how."

Once the man has planted the seed, there are certain things that are out of his hands. Sure, he can water the seed and weed around it to help it along, but that's not the point Jesus is making here. The point is that once the seed has been planted, the germination of the seed takes place through Faith and from man and his efforts.

God's Kingdom develops from the very smallest of beginnings, whether it be the moment of conception of a physical human life, Whether it be the critical moment as an individual suddenly realizes that Christ is the one and only answer in our lives. Whether it be the gem of an idea produced as if from nowhere, but we know that idea is a gift from God.

All these situations are of course the mustard seed that Jesus described in the first parable in Mark's Gospel today.

May God bless us as the seed of faith continues to grow within us grows so much that it overflows to the planting of the same seed in

the hearts and lives of those around us, so that there is an even more bountiful harvest of souls.

This is the answer to the power of Faith. This is the Kingdom of God !

Amen.

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