

Matthew 13: 31-35

Jesus proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the birds of the sky come down and dwell in its branches."



He spoke to them another story/parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowd in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world."

Small. Gradual. Hidden

In the gospel passage above, Jesus shares two parables of the Kingdom of God. In the first, he compares the Kingdom to a mustard seed. What does this imply? First, that the Kingdom begins small. Tiny, in fact. Perhaps easily missed. Second, seeds usually develop gradually, often slowly. "Presto" is not God's usual way of doing things. God's ways are more slow-but-steady. Third, a seed is not a finished product. It is hidden potential.



Then Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like yeast that a woman (in her kitchen) mixes with "three measures of wheat flour"—enough for sixty loaves! Was she feeding an army? More likely, a wedding feast. Yeast works secretly. A tiny amount has a huge effect on the entire dough. These two short parables (only four sentences long) can raise some questions worth pondering.

Are we too enamored with the big and spectacular in our world? *Little is beautiful. Small can be good.* Are we too focused on the loud, the showy, the sensational in our lives? *What lies hidden can matter the most.*

Do we expect instant results? *Growth takes*

time. Do we demand the total package, the finished product in individuals, in our institutions, in ourselves? Maybe we need to nourish potential more. Do we downplay the ordinary in our lives? Instead, may we learn to see the miraculous in the mundane... and come to believe that all places—even gardens and kitchens—can harbor the holy.

For reflection...

What “small” things in your life do you find beautiful?

Is there someone in your own life who helped nourish the potential in you? How did they do that?

Is there an ordinary place in your life that you feel is a “holy place” for you? What makes it holy?

Where do you experience the “Kingdom of God” in your life?

When thinking back on ‘ministry happenings’ there are some that are hilarious, and others of being able to share Sacrament, and others of reconciliation. One Easter at a vigil the ushers were so diligent that the Baptismal font, after being cleaned, was never filled and when it came time to Baptize newcomers improvisation took over and I picked up the large pitcher went and got water in it and carried it on one shoulder like it was part of what was planned. Another Vigil there were so many who came into the church through the three Initiatory Sacraments that the clergy person and myself just stood there and cried at how wonderful the experience was.

Three funerals stand out: One was during the high holy days before Easter and the man who died suddenly had a song requested by his wife. It was not a hymn, it was Bob Seger and I am sure the participants will think of him every time they hear the song. Another was a truck driver who died and another request for a song and it also will jingle everyones memory whenever they hear it. Roll ‘Em Toll ‘Em Keep Them Babies Roling. Another funeral was for a wonderful gal, a hair dresser, who requested jokes to be told at her funeral. Her humor was remembered and folks shared and watched her video and all the daring things she did, and the trophies she received for bowling and skeet shooting. She’s now been gone six months. Who would have figured? Weddings, well I was shocked at one because neither the bride or groom had a signature to write on the license. Hard to believe in this day and age that anybody could get through school and not know how to write. Then a most honored marriage celebration was for Ray and Chris, a same sex couple who had already proved their devotion to one another so presiding over their wedding was a pleasure as well as a privilege.

One of the adult Baptisms really stands out as it felt like I was able to look into the very soul of this 20 something male and he still keeps in touch, is steeped in his faith and unwavering about his convictions.

All the children’s Baptisms have been beautiful and exciting as families come together to witness and share in the blessing. So many beautiful experiences!