

**17 June 2018. 11th Sunday Year B**

St Mark explains that Jesus insisted on speaking to the people in parables. Later he would explain more clearly to his disciples.

A BBC producer once told me that Jesus would have been an ideal speaker on "Thought for the Day".

His parables were short and full of ideas. He knew how to tell a good story and how to hold people's attention. There are many different levels of meaning. Each time we listen we can learn something more. Look at today's parable.

The farmer sowing seed in the ground must leave it to grow. You can't keep digging it up to see how it is getting on. As he watches he sees the seed coming to full growth. This is one of several parables where Jesus uses familiar country images. The mustard seed, for example, is tiny. It is the size of a full stop on a piece of paper. Yet Jesus compares it to the Kingdom of God.

He is surely telling us that God works in our world quietly, unobtrusively, usually unnoticed. It is the same for us.

We are called by God to build up his Kingdom here on Earth. When I say "we" I mean all the baptised. It is all our task to witness to Christ, not just here in Church once a week, but everywhere and always. How can we do that?

Again, the mustard seed gives us the key.

It is by doing small things lovingly and generously that we can work with Christ to make our world a better place, that is the place where we live and work.

St Therese of Lisieux taught this lesson. We can each of us become holy by doing the ordinary things of life extraordinarily well.

Like the mustard seed growing unnoticed and unseen, Our small acts of love and kindness will largely go unnoticed by the world around us, but the people whose lives we touch will certainly notice.

Here at Mass our insignificant gifts of bread and wine become the very body and blood of Our Lord. In the same way our small and seemingly insignificant acts of love and kindness, united with Our Lord's sacrifice on the Cross take on a new meaning. As we receive Christ in Holy Communion we are given the grace to go on loving and giving. I am not talking about simply being nice to others. Nourished by Christ in the Eucharist we make him present to others. We are witnessing to the Gospel.

That is what is implied in the words of dismissal at the end of Mass, placed there by Pope Benedict.

"Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord."

"Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."