



Bringing Home the Word

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time | June 17, 2018

God Is Our GPS

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I have a good sense of direction. If I drive by a place, I can usually find my way back, walking or driving as much by instinct that says, “I think it’s over that way a little,” as by any street names or landmarks. I like following unknown paths in the woods just to see where they lead. I almost always find my way back with a minimum of backtracking.

This bothers my husband, who is a firm believer in maps, map apps, and GPS voices telling him when to turn. Often he ignores them to take a different route,

but he is comforted by their presence and reliably gets from point A to point B.

“We walk by faith, not by sight,” St. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7. He may not have had a store in mind, but in a very real way he was talking about getting from point A to point B—from our wandering in this world to our home with God. He was talking about making it out of our spiritual woods into the light of day and making discoveries along the way.

We see as human beings do and not as God does. Paul suggests we find our way through our faith in God, who is light in our darkness, the path on which we walk, our goal and destination.

Our longing to know where we are going is satisfied when we realize we are going to him. Some will take detours and get utterly lost. Others will rely on maps, and still others will follow those who have gone before—the saints who are our examples or Christ himself. Walking by faith isn’t easy, but God will get us to where we are going if we trust in him. +

Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 17:22–24

Every tree of the field will know that I am the LORD. I...wither up the green tree, and make the dry tree bloom.

2 Corinthians 5:6–10

We would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord.

Mark 4:26–34

[Jesus said,] “But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches.”

We need to find our way through faith in God.

A Word From Pope Francis

Evangelization does not consist in proselytizing, for proselytizing is a caricature of evangelization, but rather evangelizing entails attracting by our witness those who are far off. It means humbly drawing near to those who feel distant from God in the Church, drawing near to those who feel judged and condemned.

—Homily at Mass for the Evangelization of Peoples, July 7, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I let the force of my faith multiply into acts of love and service?
- Do I trust in God to lead me in my life to him?



The Tiny Seed of Faith

By Joyce Rupp

It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants (Mark 4:31–32).

A seed lay in the heart of silent soil, so tiny one couldn't dream of its growing into a magnificent plant. Only a sturdy faith could trust that something so seemingly dead would hold the promise of immense growth.

While there is tremendous potential for growth in a seed, it doesn't do the growing unaided. Sun, rain, and soil release energy in the seed, enabling it to awaken and grow.

Today's Gospel parable describes how the reign of God's love grows. The foundation of God's reign is a trusting faith—not faith as an assent to religious doctrines, but a faith that believes we can grow as loving people. This faith is the persistent belief in a gracious divinity, one who empowers us to be spiritually transformed.

This faith lies deep within our spiritual soil. Jesus understood the little mustard seed and its astounding growth. He knew the challenge of believing in something one can't perceive. Jesus urged this faith to believe in God's transforming love, even when our spirits are tired.

Faith means growing in our ability to trust God with the seed of ourselves. We would much rather be in charge of our lives, having things our own way. But our seeds of faith are dependent on the grace of God, much like a mustard seed is

dependent on soil and climate. And like the mustard seed, our tiny beginnings of spiritual awakening are capable of immense growth.

Slow, Deep Growth

This seed of faith usually grows slowly. It requires an assent of our will to God's ability of helping us grow, even though we may not feel him doing so. Faith assures us that the One who plants the seed of faith will be there to care for and nurture it.

I recognized this kind of faith in a story from a friend: "The Catholic Worker House never actually runs out of food," he said. "Meals may be mismatched foods like vegetarian or mostly bread, but there's always food. However, one Saturday night they were completely out of food. Fran and Brad were there alone, talking about what they'd do without food for the Sunday noon meal. They prayed together that somehow food would be there the next day. On Saturday night an unexpected group came to the door with large pans of lasagna, masses of rolls, cookies, and potato chips. Next day at noon more than a hundred guests arrived. Everyone who was hungry got a full plate, including sweets, and bread. No food appeal ever went out—except those prayers."

Hearts of Hope

Did Fran and Brad's faith turn God's hand? Did their prayer cause food to be given? No, the food was already in someone's oven when they entrusted their anxiety to God. Rather, prayer nurtured their seed of faith, and helped their trust to grow larger than their worries. Prayer filled them with peace rather than anxiety, assuring them that what they needed would somehow come.

It is in our moments of uncertainty and need that our seed of faith is able to stretch and grow. It is then that we discover the power of trustful waiting and the beauty of undefeated hope. Even the tiniest of seeds know this wondrous truth. +



Lord, you reveal the kingdom of God to all people. Help me bear witness to God's kingdom of compassion and peace.

From Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 18-23, 2018

Monday, Weekday:

1 Kgs 21:1–16 / Mt 5:38–42

Tuesday, Weekday:

1 Kgs 21:17–29 / Mt 5:43–48

Wednesday, Weekday:

2 Kgs 2:1, 6–14 / Mt 6:1–6, 16–18

Thursday, St. Aloysius Gonzaga:

Sir 48:1–14 / Mt 6:7–15

Friday, Weekday:

2 Kgs 11:1–4, 9–18, 20 / Mt 6:19–23

Saturday, Weekday:

2 Chr 24:17–25 / Mt 6:24–34