

[87] ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME B

FIRST READING

I have made the small tree great.

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel 17:22-24

The Lord God said:

I will cut a tender twig from the very top of a cedar tree
and plant it on the peak of a tall mountain.

I will plant it on the highest mountain in Israel.

It will put out branches

and grow into a beautiful and useful cedar tree.

All kinds of birds will find shelter under it and shade in its branches.

Every tree in the forest will then know that I, the Lord,
bring down tall trees and make short trees grow tall.

I dry up green trees and make dried up trees turn green again.

I, the Lord, have spoken!

And I will keep my word.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

92:1-2, 12-13

R. (see 2a) Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

It is wonderful to be grateful
and to sing your praises,
Lord Most High!
It is wonderful each morning
to tell about your love
and at night to announce
how faithful you are.

R. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

Good people will prosper
like palm trees,
and they will grow strong
like the cedars of Lebanon.

They will take root
in your house, Lord God,
and they will do well.

R. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

SECOND READING

Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it,
we are intent on pleasing the Lord.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Corinthians

5:6-10

Brothers and sisters:
Always be cheerful!
As long as we are in these bodies,
we are away from the Lord.
But we live by faith, not by what we see.

We should be cheerful,
because we would rather leave these bodies
and be at home with the Lord.
But whether we are at home with the Lord or away from him,
we still try our best to please him.
After all, Christ will judge each of us
for the good or the bad that we do
while living in these bodies.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower;
all who come to him will live for ever.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

The mustard seed, the smallest of all the seeds,
grows into the biggest shrub of all.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark

4:30-34

Jesus said: "What is God's kingdom like?
What story can I use to explain it?
It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground.
It is the smallest seed in all the world.
But once it is planted,
it grows larger than any garden plant.
It even puts out branches
that are big enough for birds to rest in its shade."

Jesus used many other stories when he spoke to the people,
and he taught them as much as they could understand.
He did not tell them anything without using stories.
But when he was alone with his disciples,
he explained everything to them.

The gospel of the Lord.

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B

Prayer:

Dear God,

I know that I am small right now but please help me to do the little things that will become big blessings to others.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Readings:

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Psalm 92:1-2, 12-13

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Mark 4:30-34

Reflection:

Preparation: Bring a picture of a fully grown mustard tree and some mustard seeds (found in the spice section of the grocery store)

Jesus uses a story today to help us understand the lesson He is teaching. He says that the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. Look how small the mustard seed is (show the seed) and think about what we picture in our minds when we hear the word "kingdom." We usually think big areas of land with lots of people, castles, villages and a king telling people what to do. God's Kingdom is very similar. It is very big. It has lots of people. It has churches (castles), and a King – God! God takes care of us as a king would and wants the Kingdom to grow and continually become bigger. It grows by people helping and loving each other so that others want to come and be a part of the Kingdom, too.

When a mustard seed is planted it grows into a big tree that provides homes for birds and shelter for people and animals. (Show the picture of the mustard tree). Our lives and good deeds are like the mustard seed. Every little good deed that we do will become part of God's Kingdom helping it to grow bigger. The bigger God's Kingdom grows, the more people will be loved, cared for and happy.

Discussion:

1. What little deeds can you do for others to help grow God's Kingdom?

Activity:

Materials: White Card Stock, Yarn, Clear Contact Paper, Hole Punch, Colored Pencils or Markers, Scissors, Glue, Mustard Seeds (can be found in the spice section of the grocery store)

Preparation:

1. Optional: Create 3.5 inch circles on the card stock with the words "With God, I can do BIG things!" written around the edges of each circle. Enough for each child in the class.
2. Cut 3.5 inch circles out of the card stock. Enough for each child in the class.
3. Cut the contact paper into 3.75 inch circles
4. Cut yarn into pieces long enough to make necklaces.

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Create:

1. Give each child in the class a card stock circle and a contact paper circle.
2. If you did not pre-do #1 above, have the children write that phrase on their cards around the edges of the circle.
3. Give each child a mustard seed.
4. Using a small amount of glue, have them glue the mustard seed onto the center of the card circle.
5. Decorate the circles.
6. Cover the decorated circles with mustard seeds on them with the clear contact paper circles.
7. Trim the the edged of the circles, cutting off excess contact paper.
8. Make a hole towards the top of each circle.
9. Put yarn through hole and tie, creating a necklace.