

**Proclamation of the Gospel**

The Lord be with you.  
And with your Spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. Mark.  
Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus said to the crowds: "This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and he would sleep and rise night and day and through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest is at hand."

He said to them, "To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? 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 and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade." With many such parables He spoke the Word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables He did not speak to them, but to His own disciples He explained everything in private.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Homily by Fr. Gerry Hurley**

Happy Father's Day to all of you fathers, and grandfathers, and godfathers, and all of you who share that ministry of fatherhood.

What a beautiful teaching Jesus provides us in the Gospel! What did you get as you heard the Gospel unfold? Even the smallest seed grows really large big. Yep. OK.

He said let me tell you a story. A man goes out and sows a seed. After sowing it, he lets it be. And then, day and night, goes to bed, he goes to sleep, gets up again, and just leaves it there. And sure enough in time, the harvest will come. As a farmer or as a sower of seed, he believes and he trusts that reality. Any farmer will tell you that truth. You let it be, let it come to fruition. So there is a real telltale piece in the Gospel. The primary focus of the parable is a confirmation that there will be a harvest if you sow the seed. But, you've got to be patient. Once the seed is sown, there is an assurance of harvest. The parable was told to encourage those disciples were beginning to lose heart and thinking we're never gonna get this done.

There's so much to do with the proclamation of the kingdom. And they were becoming discouraged. Jesus is providing this parable as a real means of encouragement to them saying it's happening. You just don't see it.

It's a very important truth. You know, once the seed is in the ground, if you go out and dig it up every day to see whether it's growing or not, it ain't gonna happen. It is a great contrast for us in the message of faith. That we've gotta believe and gotta trust that if we are doing in the accord with His invitation, it will yield a harvest. Perhaps not as quickly as we want. That is the big piece because we like it now. Amen? Like those disciples, we need to be reminded periodically. Yeah, we sure do. Because we live in the instant age. And, like those disciples, we need to be reminded periodically — slow it down. It's OK. It is happening. It's in His hands.

We live in the age of the Instant product, and naturally we become distressed when we can't have things instantaneously. We live in the age of instant soup, right? Not like what my grandmother used to make. You know? A few days of preparation and good stuff. It would put hair on your chest and all of those good things. Instant coffee, instant tea, instant photos. Do you remember when you had to take that roll of film to the pharmacy? The chemist — we used to call it in Ireland. That's we call the pharmacy. And we'd bring it there. We would ask them to develop it. They would put it in an envelope and come back in two days. In two days we'd come rushing back. And, the bad news, no it didn't come in. Because of the rain or because of something else. And so distressed. Maybe tomorrow. You'd come back tomorrow and eventually get the pictures. Can't wait to get them out of the envelope and check them out. Now you immediately. It's amazing!

Now we have the instant pot-pie. Marie Callender made a living out of it, right? But it seems like, you know, it's never long enough in the oven for the carrots to be really done, you know? It certainly is not like my grandmother's chicken pot pie. What happens is, we forgo quality. Because of the time and effort that is saved. It may not be the best process. We are willing to forgo a lot of good. If we look carefully, we would find that a lot of things. There is not a short cut to many good things. We have pretty much instant whatever you want instantaneously. We have instant just about everything. Why? Because there are people out there who make a living out of that reality — anticipating what you want, and then they have it instantly.

But it's amazing because we pay a large price for that. Not in terms of dollars and cents, but in terms of who we are. Because in many ways we are tricked into the reality. We are so engaged for speed and movement and intensity. It's hard to relax. It seems like, hey when I was growing up, man those days used to be long. We didn't get up until 9 o'clock because we believed Jesus got up you just a little before that. But, the days — they were long and healthy. Nowadays it seems like, wow! It's 3:00 already? Wow! It's amazing. Because of the intensity maybe in that motor within me. The practice of having everything so handily and so readily available can cause us to forget that some things are just not available quickly.

And, that's what Jesus was telling them in the Gospel. To grow to maturity as a human being, it's a life process. Just when you think you have it figured — (someone's phone goes off in the congregation) — it's amazing. Thank you! It's a good cue. Just when you think you have the figured, absolutely! Just when you think you have it figured, the Lord has a great way of showing you something else. Here's something else you might work on. And it is the process of a lifetime, there's no doubt about it. To grow relationships — none of them grow instantaneously. There's no instant relationships. You may have a spark instantly. But, sometimes that spark goes out, sometimes it is fanned into flame and it becomes a great and amazing relationship. But it takes effort and it takes time, and it takes commitment, and it takes a desire to be with that person.

We live in an age where — just in between the two Masses I was talking to my sister and my brother. My sister is in Spain. She was on FaceTime. My brother is in Ireland. Talking to them both. And it'd be very easy to be lulled into the reality that that's okay just because we can talk to them a FaceTime. It's not the same thing as being with them. And how easily we can slide into the fact that hey, our friends and loved ones and relatives and parishioners in the nursing home — we could visit them on FaceTime. It wouldn't work. It wouldn't work.

The personal visit is pretty important. To get to know and understand one's children. You know. I don't. But, you tell me it's pretty significant. Man, it goes a long time. Just when you think you have them figured out, and you have it under control, they have a way of showing you something different, right? It takes a lot of effort, it takes a lot of encouragement, a lot of discipline, a lot of discoveries, a lot of experience, a lot of respect, a lot of hard work. Just raising children. It takes a lot of effort to overcome our weaknesses and our tendency toward sin. It takes a lot of effort to build church, to build church community and experience. It takes a long time.

We were in Canada, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for the past week, a number of us. Five of us from the Parish and we were looking at a church community that really has come to understand that experience of what it means to be really church. They put a great deal of effort into it but it's been a slow process. Father James Mallon wrote the book, he was formerly the pastor and now the bishop has pulled them in to be a director for the diocese helping other parishes. We went to that parish. It's a pretty extraordinary place. It's the amalgamation of three parishes. That had just happened before he became pastor. They were still working through a lot of the realities, you know there is resistance — well that's not the way to do it — this is the way to do it — or this is the way we've always done it, which is one of the most common pieces in the Church.

They worked through all of those ideologies, and all of those thoughts and growing pains, in the amalgamation of these parishes. And they were pretty amazing as a parish. They worked through a lot of the kinks and a lot of the difficulties. It was all centered around one piece — one single piece, and we make that profession of faith at the doxology of Mass every time we do this in memory of Him. That it was ultimately “Through Him, With Him, and in Him.”

It's the only way of becoming Church in the modern world. People are crying out for it. And we went there. We had a great experience. God, it was amazing to see everybody singing. Would you like to be in a Church where everybody is singing? Yes! And the rest of you, besides Fred? Sure! Absolutely! Hey, we'll be there one day too.

It was a pretty extraordinary feeling to be in that kind of energy, celebrating and proclaiming our Faith, and not looking for somebody else or anybody else to do it. You know, it's a great complement to the music people when we sing, when we join with them, right?. Absolutely — the effort and energy they put into it. We complement it when we follow suit. They grew an amazing Church there. But it was through patient endurance, humility, and trust that they were growing in the right direction.

We are growing Church here. We have planted the seeds. We are still awaiting the fullness of the harvest. But, it's really only in the power of the Holy Spirit that it comes to fruition. We've talked so much about the Holy Spirit — His gift that ultimately brings the harvest to fruition. We are on track .... but sometimes we've got to slow it down a little and be aware and be patient that we're not there yet. We are moving toward.

We live also in the push-button world. Isn't it amazing? I push a button and a light comes on. I never have to think about all the people that were engaged in bringing that process to fruition. Can you imagine the people who laid the lines, the electrical lines, the plant that supplies the source, and all of the people who were engaged so that I could press that switch? A lot of people!

I press a switch and some amazing things happen! I push a button and my coffee is made. I push a few buttons in the hole in the wall and money comes out. Provided you have money behind the hole in the wall to begin with. And, I push a button and my car cranks up (provided I have the right key in the right area and my car cranks up.)

I push many buttons and some extraordinary things happen. This can make me very demanding, and indeed I can grow very impatient when things don't come quickly to me. This is a great story about patience, and becoming aware deep within myself, that I am not in control, most especially in my spiritual life .... He is!

The great teacher is Nature itself. Things take time to grow. And they take time to ripen. Nature doesn't take any shortcuts.....isn't that amazing? All the seasons are needed. I am sure you have found, just as I have, that all of the seasons are needed. Nothing is wasted. Whatever season you are in at the present time He is there, too..... Pray for the power of His Holy Spirit.

The lovely parable of the seed growing by itself, through each season, shows us that there is an Almighty Power working for us. Our job is to sow the seed. Then God has to take over. And God does for sure. Any farmer will tell you that. If we do the right thing the harvest will most assuredly come ! But can we be Patient, can we wait , can we Trust !

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