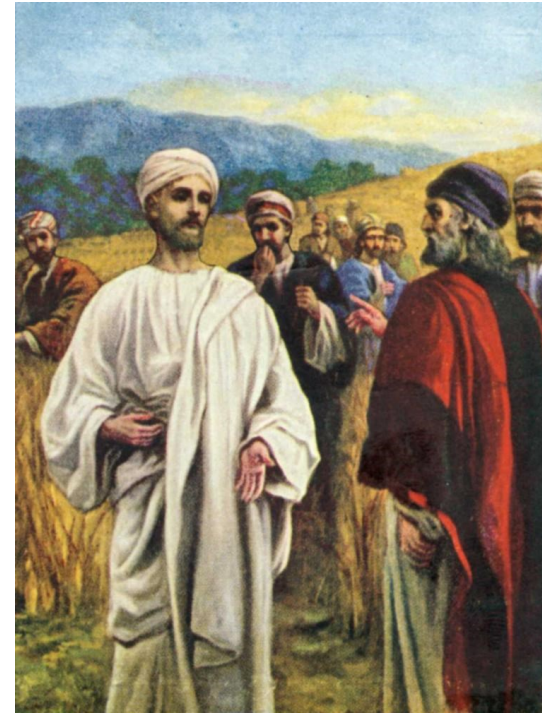


Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

**“The End” Notes**

- [1] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible pg. 73
- [2] Navarre Bible, Gospel of Mark pg. 96
- [3] Fernandez, In conversation with God 3, 89.2
- [4] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 3, 89.2
- [5] ibid.
- [6] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 3, 89.2
- [7] ibid.
- [8] CCC 546
- [9] Aquinas, Catena
- [10] ibid.
- [11] cf. ibid.
- [12] ibid.



**He Spoke in Parables**  
11th Sunday of Ordinary Time

*Link to Liturgy offers fast, free and faithful lessons on the Gospels, easily arranged for evangelization and catechesis.*

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**Lessons and Discussions**

**Page 5 – The Interior Life**

*“the seed would sprout and grow”*

**Page 7 – The Kingdom Revealed**

*“To what shall we compare the kingdom of God”*

**Page 9 – He Spoke in Parables**

*“With many such parables he spoke the word to them”*

**Introit (Entrance Antiphon) – Roman Missal**

*This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme.*

O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you; be my help.  
Do not abandon or forsake me, O God, my Savior!

**Alternate options:**

Inside Out (Song of Praise)  
Who are You? (Remnant)  
All People That on Earth Do Dwell (Hymn)  
Lift High the Cross (Hymn)  
Praise the Lord (Hymn)

**Collect –Roman Missal**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

O God, strength of those who hope in you,  
graciously hear our pleas,  
and, since without you mortal frailty can do nothing,  
grant us always the help of your grace,  
that in following your commands  
we may please you by our resolve and our deeds.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

**Gospel Reading – Mark 4:26-34 – Roman Missal**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to 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 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,

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

**Marian Antiphon – Ave Regina Caelorum – Simple Tone**

**IV. ANTIPHON SALVE REGINA, SIMPLE TONE**  
From First Vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity to None on Saturday  
before the First Sunday of Advent.

Ant.  
5.  
**S** Alve, Re-gi-na, \* ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ : Vi- ta, dulcé-do, et spes nostra,  
salve. Ad te clamá-mus, éx-su-les, fi-li-i He-væ Ad te suspi-rá-mus,  
gemén-tes et flentes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advocá-ta  
nostra, il-los tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ócu-los ad nos convér-te. Et Je-sum,  
bene-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, nobis post hoc exsi-li-um osténde.  
O clemens : O pi-a : O dulcis \* Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.  
R. *Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi*

**English Translation**

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of they womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God  
R. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

happen. Man may be able to look at history and facts to see how the Church has grown, but how it grew given the odds and how small the chances were it is only by God's grace and intercession that this happens.

**What does the "sickle" symbolize?** The "sickle" symbolizes death or the time of final judgment on the world at the Second Coming of Christ.[11]

**How do we fit into this parable?** We all fit into this parable because we are allowed to co-operate in God's kingdom. We have to realize that in the grand scheme of things, we are but a speck of dust. However, God takes us and allows us to bear much fruit for His kingdom. We should stop and think of the great dichotomy of how great and large God is, and how little and insignificant we are. When we humble ourselves, then we are greatly exalted as illustrated in the first reading.

Saint Chrysostom said, "Christ himself is the man who rises, for He sat waiting with patience, that they who received seed should bear fruit. He rises, that is, by the word of His love, He makes us grow to the bringing forth fruit, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand, by which is meant the day, and on the left, by which is meant the night of persecution; for by these the seed springs up and does not wither." [12]

### Discussion Questions

How does this parable relate to our life?  
(strongly encourage a Lectio Divina discussion on this question.)  
What can we do to prepare our heart (the "soil") to be ready to plant and cultivate the seeds of God?

### Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Prayer of Saint Teresa of Avila

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

Let nothing disturb you,  
Let nothing frighten you,  
All things are passing away:  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things  
Whoever has God lacks nothing;  
God alone suffices.

for the harvest has come."

He said, "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

### Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings

*From a treatise on the Lord's Prayer by Saint Cyprian, bishop and martyr*

Let your prayer come from a humble heart

When we pray, our words should be calm, modest and disciplined. Let us reflect that we are standing before God. We should please him both by our bodily posture and the manner of our speech. It is characteristic of the vulgar to shout and make a noise, not those who are modest. On the contrary, they should employ a quiet tone in their prayer.

Moreover, in the course of this teaching, the Lord instructed us to pray in secret. Hidden and secluded places, even our own rooms, give witness to our belief that God is present everywhere; that he sees and hears all; that in the fullness of his majesty, he penetrates hidden and secret places. This is the teaching of Jeremiah: Am I God when I am near, and not God when I am far away? Can anyone hide in a dark corner without my seeing him? Do I not fill heaven and earth? Another passage of Scripture says: The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, observing both good and wicked men.

The same modesty and discipline should characterize our liturgical prayer as well. When we gather to celebrate the divine mysteries with God's priest, we should not express our prayer in unruly words; the petition that should be made to God with moderation is not to be shouted out noisily and verbosely. For God hears our heart not our voice. He sees our thoughts; he is

not to be shouted at. The Lord showed us this when he asked: Why do you think evil in your hearts? The book of Revelation testifies to this also: And all the churches shall know that I am the one who searches the heart and the desires.

Anna maintained this rule; in her observance of it she is an image of the Church. In the First Book of Kings we are told that she prayed quietly and modestly to God in the recesses of her heart. Her prayer was secret but her faith was evident. She did not pray with her voice, but with her heart, for she knew that in this way the Lord would hear her. She prayed with faith and obtained what she sought. Scripture makes this clear in the words: She was speaking in her heart; her lips were moving but her voice could not be heard; and the Lord heard her prayer. The psalmist also reminds us: Commune within your own hearts, and in the privacy of your room express your remorse. This is the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Through Jeremiah he suggests this: Say in your hearts: Lord, it is you that we have to worship. My friends, anyone who worships should remember the way in which the tax-collector prayed in the temple alongside the Pharisee. He did not raise his eyes immodestly to heaven or lift up his hands arrogantly. Instead he struck his breast and confessing the sins hidden within his heart he implored the assistance of God's mercy. While the Pharisee was pleased with himself, the tax-collector deserved to be cleansed much more because of the manner in which he prayed. For he did not place his hope of salvation in the certainty of his own innocence; indeed, no one is innocent. Rather he prayed humbly, confessing his sins. And the Lord who forgives the lowly heard his prayer.

### **Responsory – Office of Readings**

Let us consider how we should live in the presence of God and his angels.

— And so let us stand singing psalms in such a way that mind and voice are in harmony.

Let us recall that God does not delight in how much we pray, but in our purity of heart and sorrow for sin.

— And so let us stand singing psalms in such a way that mind and voice are in harmony.

### **He Spoke in Parables – Lesson and Discussion**

*“With many such parables he spoke the word to them”*

There are two levels to the gospel reading: the use of parables and the meaning behind them.

**Why does Jesus use the parable of seeds to talk about the kingdom of God?** One of Jesus' characteristic features when teaching is the use of parables. “Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough; deeds are required. The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word? What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables.”[8]

See also – Link to Liturgy Lesson – Purpose of Parables

Let us break the parable down a little further.

**What is the “Kingdom of God”?** Saint Jerome teaches us that, “The kingdom of God is the Church which is ruled by God, and herself rules over men, and treads down the powers which are contrary to her, and all wickedness.”[9]

**What does the “seed” represent?** Again, we will go to Jerome who said, “For the seed is the word of life, the ground is the human heart, and the sleep of the man means the death of the Savior. The seed springs up night and day, because after the sleep of Christ, the number of Christians, through calamity and prosperity, continued to flourish more and more in faith, and to wax greater in deed.”[10] The seed that was planted by Christ was not understood by the Pharisees and Sadducees, but to those who were humbled and believed in Jesus Christ who is the “word of life”. If we allow Christ's words to be planted in our hearts and we die with Him will also rise with Him. (cf. Rm. 6:8)

### **STORY – Jack and the Beanstalk – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:20**

[https://youtu.be/\\_VCpAYajmvo](https://youtu.be/_VCpAYajmvo)

This famous childhood story is about a boy who is given some magical beans and when he plants them a massive beanstalk grows to the sky. The small seeds that were planted by Christ have grown the Church to be massive and only by God did this

**How has the kingdom been revealed?** The kingdom has been revealed through Christ. It was stated in today's first reading that the kingdom of God would be set apart and grow. Before Christ came into this world God was proclaiming it through His prophets and His chosen people. The Old Testament is the story of the coming salvation of Jesus Christ. It is by Jesus' obedience to the Father's will that He has been highly exalted and His kingdom grows to this day. (Cf. Phil. 2:6-8)

**Why did the kingdom of God grow?** The kingdom of God grew because it was planted and supported by God. The Catholic Church in human terms should have not and frankly could not have succeeded all by itself. Think of the greatest bands, businesses, countries, etc. and think how they have risen and fallen in the course of time. Many of those bands, businesses, countries, etc. collapsed because of the greed, selfishness and pride that fell between them. The first apostles could never have dreamed or thought of what the Church would become! They "walked by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7) as Saint Paul said in the second reading.

**How did the kingdom of God grow so large?** The kingdom of God continues to grow because of the people who live in the kingdom and serve God. The Responsorial Psalm speaks of the just flourishing in the house of the Lord. (Cf. Ps. 92:13-14) In our culture today we tend to think very individualistically. We only think of how we can get ahead or how we did something on our own. In the kingdom of God we realize that it is not about our individual self; it is about Him. We must be obedient to God's will and conform our will to His. This doesn't mean we should be robots. On the contrary. If in the first place, we use the talents and gifts that God has given to us, and then listen to Him on how we should use the gifts, then we can be fully alive! We can help grow the kingdom of God.

### Discussion Questions

Discuss any gifts or talents that each has to help grow the kingdom of God?

Discuss various ways people can or have been destructive towards the kingdom of God?

Discuss a time when various persons allowed God to take control of their life and the positive outcome.

### The Interior Life – Lesson and Discussion

*"the seed would sprout and grow"*

**How does the parable stress the interior life?** In the parable today, Jesus speaks about the seed being planted. On the one hand, the grain signifies the increase in virtue and morality. "... The seeds of good intentions are sown; these gradually bring forth the blade of repentance and ultimately the mature ear of charitable works. When established in virtue, we are made ripe for God's harvest." [1] The parable also stresses the action of God's grace being planted in our soul. "God silently works a transformation in us, whether we sleep or watch, causing resolutions to take shape in our soul – resolutions to be faithful, to surrender ourselves, to respond to grace – until we reach 'mature manhood'." [2]

### MUSIC – From the Inside Out – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 5:51

<https://youtu.be/SZ-fghqc8Oo>

The song talks about God's light shining from the inside out of us. We can do this when we allow God to consume us from the inside out.

**What happens to us and the culture if we perfect the interior life?** As we perfect the interior life the exterior life begins to transform as well. We live what we believe, and we believe what we live. If we say yes to God and we allow Him to cultivate our interior life, then it leads us to care more for him than we care about what others think. As Saint Paul says, "Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ." (Gal. 1:10) "Rather must we be concerned to make Christ known no matter where we find ourselves, very much aware of the treasure we have found, of the precious pearl we have located after much searching ... Many who call themselves Christians show little courage when they should be witnessing to their faith. They seem to be more concerned about the opinion of others than about the judgment of Christ. They often allow themselves to be carried along by the current, afraid of saying anything. This attitude betrays superficiality, lack of deep convictions and little love of God. Naturally enough, at times it will be hard to behave in accordance with what we are, Christians who wish to live their faith at every moment and in every circumstance of life." [3]

**Could we focus only on the interior life?** If we only focus on the interior life then we only focus on ourselves and can fall into selfishness. Jesus instructs us to go out and make disciples. He has placed us on a hill, a shining beacon and has called us to change the society from the inside out. “Working from within society, Christians changed it. There the seed fell, then spread to the whole world. Although it was a small seed it carried a divine power, because the seed was Christ’s.”[4] We can see this with the first century Christians in Rome where many men, women and children were converted in every walk of life. From nobility and military to homeless and the lowly, they worked “shoulder to shoulder, in the same jobs as everyone else, facing the same problems, obeying the same laws, unless they were directly contrary to the law of God.”[5]

**How can we take what we believe in our interior life to our exterior life?** Our interior life starts as a small mustard seed that can grow to the largest bush. Likewise, our little actions can grow to something amazing with God’s grace. “... let us not neglect to do what we can, because God counts on that contribution. Without prayer and sacrifice He will ensure that there is growth and fruit. That ‘little’ we can do may be advising a colleague or friend to read a particular book; or being attentive to a client, fellow passenger or workmate; or giving a helping hand when needed; or praying for sick friend or a neighbor’s child, and asking that they pray for us; or helping someone get to Confession.”[6]

**MOVIE – For Greater Glory – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 7:56**

[https://youtu.be/moWK\\_wFojmI](https://youtu.be/moWK_wFojmI)

This film clip from the movie, "For Greater Glory" shows the death of Fr. Christopher and Bl. Jose Luis Sanchez del Rio. The movie is based on the Cristada movement in Mexico in the 1920's and the story of Jose Luis. In the first part of the clip the priest tells the future Blessed Jose Luis that “who are you if you don’t stand up for what you believe?” He goes on to tell him that there is no greater glory than to give your life to Christ. When we proclaim that we are a Christian we must be ready to face whatever comes our way, whether it is the firing squad of insults and disrespect, or if it is an actual guns with ammunition firing squad.

As always we must not let our actions be without the love of Christ. We must be daringly apostolic! “This can be so if we

remain united to God, if we reject a comfort-loving existence, if we overcome luke-warmness and discouragement.”[7]

**The Kingdom Revealed – Lesson and Discussion**

*“To what shall we compare the kingdom of God”*

We read in the first reading from the prophet Ezekiel, the prophecy from God that He will lift the lowly and set them high on the mountaintop. In the Gospel reading we hear Jesus proclaiming the kingdom of God while small, like the remnants of Israel, will grow to be the largest. Jesus uses the analogy of the mustard seed, which is the smallest seed but becomes the largest bush. In our present time we do not know exactly everything with regards to how the judgment will happen, but we do have the advantage of seeing salvation history played out. We know the spoiler already; Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and He will come again.

**MOVIE – Spoiler Alert Movie Endings: The Sixth Sense – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:29**

<https://youtu.be/7DdhpLeImXA>

We will not spoil anything about the ending of this movie, but we will say that when one watches the movie for the first time it is a big surprise. However, when the movie is viewed a second time, the clues are easy to recognize throughout. While many have been shocked by the resurrection of Christ and the growth of His Church, He does not hide anything from anyone.

**TV SHOW – How I Met Your Mother – Ted Mosby Speech – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:11**

<https://youtu.be/d9Q-rW43310>

In this moving clip the main character Ted goes to his future wife’s apartment and professes how much he loves her. He confesses how he wishes he didn’t have to wait so long to be with her. God’s love is like Ted Mosby. God loves us in this life and beyond. He cannot wait to be with us and to save us. God’s plan for salvation for each and every one of us was and is perfect. While we might not understand why God’s timing is the way it is, be assured that in the end we will be with Him and remain in His love forever.