

2021 June 13

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading, Ezekiel 17-22-24, "All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord." (24a)

The Psalm 92, "The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (12)

Second Reading, 2 Corinthians 5.6-10, "All of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (10a)

The Gospel, Mark 4.26-34, "The birds of the air can make nests in its shade." ("32b)

Trees birds nestle on

Today's scripture passages are all about planting, growing, flourishing and harvesting. The Lord God is the ultimate planter and is in the act always, from the beginning of creation up to now and will be forever. Ezekiel narrates one action of the planter, breaking a tender young twig from the spring of a cedar's topmost branch and planting it on a high and lofty mountain. Jesus tells the parable of the seed growing up and bringing forth grain. He also has the small mustard seed widely spreading out its branches in such splendor that the birds of the air make their nests on them. The psalmist compares the righteousness of God to the flourishing of a palm tree, like a cedar in Lebanon, always green, lush, full of sap, and producing fruit even in its old age.

God is the planter in all these passages, and we his children are the plants and seeds. He is the one who makes us sprout, branch out, give shade and nestling ground, and produce grain to feed the creation. In the whole process this planter accompanies us always, from birth and even before, in good times and in bad, in health and sickness, till death and after. He never leaves us alone although we are not aware of his presence, or even when we abandon him and run away. All these also refer to the plan of God making humans the steward of nature, of all creation, to nourish and make it produce fruits that will sustain the whole creation and prepare it for its destiny into the land of the living, into the abode of God.

Jesus was telling all these stories in his effort to present how the kingdom of God will be like. We find him struggling to find words and expressions to draw out an outline of the kingdom. And we humans, knowing fully well that God's kingdom is beyond our comprehension, try in vain to figure out and explain and describe it in words. The reality is that no words or expressions can comprehend God's kingdom. We need to contend with our fragile faith in the promise of Jesus that his kingdom would be everlasting, and that the blessings and bounties waiting there for us are seen by no human eyes on earth.

St. Paul assures us that in this abode of God each will receive recompense for what has been done in the body and with the body. That is what all we need to care about, to do with our bodies on earth things that will enable us to reach the kingdom and possess there all those treasures God is keeping for us. In order to get a hold on them we must loosen our grip on the things on earth that hold us back or that tie our hearts in. Detachment from this world will make us more prone and attached to the kingdom, which is our destiny. The more consciously and constructively we do this the faster we will relish the sweetness of God's kingdom, not only in heaven but even on earth, here and now, today and everyday! Wish for, work on, and enjoy!

Fr. George

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

Shalom World TV 24/7 in North America.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMk1A20un1M>

<https://shalomworld.org/>

<https://shalommedia.org/>

<https://shalommedia.org/endorsement/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNJQfPj9bBE>

