

FROM FATHER DAVE

One of the common misconceptions about life is that everything can be accomplished instantly. Some of the products we purchase at the supermarket feed into this mentality. They have the word “instant” written all over them. In the end, however, I think we all come to a realization that life, particularly growth and success, does not happen instantly. It all takes time.

In the Gospel for this Sunday, Jesus tells a parable about the sower. This is a story about growth that delivers two poignant revelations. First, growth takes time. As the saying goes, “Rome was not built in a day.” In the midst of this process, there always needs to be patience and trust.

Anyone who has started something new can appreciate this concept. For example, during these last few weeks of moving there was a part of me that just wanted to snap my fingers and have everything done as instantly as possible. Of course, this is not possible. What is more, in the case of moving things seldom go quickly or smoothly. Some weeks ago I changed my personal address to 201 Church Road, only to discover that it needed to be changed again to a newly established address of 221 Church Road. I purchased a new printer for my computer and even after spending nearly three hours on the phone with a tech person could not get it to work. On that same day I parked my car in the garage and it would not fit. I share these instances not to beg your pity, but to illustrate that growth can be painstaking and certainly not instant. Growth and development take time.

The second poignant revelation to today’s Gospel parable is that the soil needs to be right for the growth to take place. The seed needs to be rightly planted. It does not have a chance if it is merely scattered on the ground or placed in a cliff.

This gospel story has great implications for our journey together as co-founders of Saint Aidan Parish. While the two previously storied parishes have been disbanded and a new parish has been formed, there is still more work to be done.

There is a saying, “Change is external, transition is internal.” We have begun to see some of the external changes with a new name, temporary signs noting that name and a combined staff, not to mention a new pastor. We also have one database and one office. We continue working on all of the externals. Very soon I will be forming new pastoral and finance councils. But this takes time, so please be trusting and patient.

The internal dimension of this moment cannot be denied. We all have to pause and look at the soil of our heart and insure that it is ready to embrace this new growth. We are all in this together now and forever. The best is yet to be I truly believe.

What I ask of from you is your trust and patience in this effort. Above all I ask for your prayers. Please pray for the success of our new parish. We all need to let go of what was and embrace what is and can be. Our roots are now as members of Saint Aidan. I cannot tell you how proud I was to celebrate the first public Mass of our new parish.

Thirty-six years ago I had to embrace a new beginning as I was sent to Rome to do my studies for the priesthood. At that time the rector said to me, “Dave, Rome is going to be different. It is not anything good or bad. It will just be different.”

Life as we live it never stays the same. It can’t. When we learn to live with the differences we not only change but we grow. What may appear to some as an obstacle can become a golden opportunity for growth.

This is our moment. God is inviting us all to change and move out of our comfort zones. This change while external in many ways cannot happen without the internal. We all need to change in three ways.

First, we need to change our minds. When a family member becomes married, our concept of family becomes broadened. With all due respect to the previous parishes, we need to live in the present moment, which for so many of us is clearly different.

Second, we need to change our hearts to become more like the heart of Christ—compassionate, understanding, empathetic and forgiving. All that we are and all that we do must be rooted in the love of Jesus Christ. We all have to follow that command, “Love one another, as I have loved you.”

Finally, together we need to change the world, most notably the world of Wexford. Faith is never meant to be private or exclusive. Moreover, parish life must never be self serving. At the end of each Mass we are sent forth to proclaim the Good News.

One of the images of our beloved patron, Saint Aidan, is that of light. He is often depicted with a torch. Together let us go forth to embrace this moment and let our torch of faith shine for the whole world. Like the old song, let us join in chorus, “This little light of mine, I am going to let it shine.” Let’s light up the world!