



Thoughts on the Journey

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June 13, 2021 - Mk 4:26-34

How much work of the Kingdom of God is hidden from our view? How many workings of the Holy Spirit reshape our lives each and every day, unaware of the transformation they bring? How far reaching are the rippling effects of events and actions to which we are blind?

Mystery is intriguing and as followers of Christ, mystery abounds.

Life is filled with interruptions along the journey - interruptions that change our course: some of them welcomed, others not so much. One minute the path going forward is clear, the next we are turned around and baffled by what is happening. We begin to falter and flounder, becoming disoriented, wondering where God is in this mix. Instead of waiting for the answers to be revealed, we begin to question God's faithfulness.

We can all agree that this past year has been filled with uncertainty. A virus that none of us could see with the naked eye, was planted, took root, and rapidly traveled from person to person, community to community, continent to continent, putting our world in turmoil and bringing a screeching halt to our so-called 'normal'.

Suddenly, we were masked and confined. The rituals and celebrations that mark our milestones and sacramental lives were disrupted; our families and friends were separated by social distancing mandates; anticipated plans were cancelled and the list goes on. In the midst of pandemic chaos, we were forced to slow down our lives and sit with our 'new normal'. We had to use our creativity to re-adjust to the changes, to re-invent our worship, to remember ourselves to community, to re-examine our priorities, to re-define ourselves in ways we never thought we would. So, how has this viral

seed helped us to grow in faith?

In Mark's gospel this week, Jesus tells the crowds the parable of the seed that grows by itself with no help from the farmer who plants and harvests it. Jesus says to them,

“This is how it is with the Kingdom of God; it is as if man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and would rise night and day and through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how.”

Then, Jesus talked to the people about the smallest of seeds - the mustard seed. Regardless of how small the seed, when planted, it becomes the largest of plants. Day and night, this growth from seed to plant is inevitable. We don't control the process - God does. Everything the plant needs for growth is in the seed's DNA.

So is true of us, the children of the Kingdom. The grace of God has been planted within us in baptism and various elements and influences continue to help us grow in the life of Christ... especially the challenges, the sufferings, even the mysteries that are hard to understand.

The fruits of the past year became noticeably apparent as people returned to Mass last week. For the first time in a year, people entered the doors of the church with their masks off and their hearts yearning for the love and support of the community. What I witnessed, was pure joy from a resilient people who pushed through the loneliness, the hardship, the losses, the sufferings and held tight to their faith, trusting in God's providence and growing in body, mind, and spirit as members of the Kingdom. We've been changed forever. Let our light shine!