

We live in the information age when we can get instant results with a simple internet search. Jesus is capable of offering instant results, but he tells us parables to help us understand the Kingdom of God not in terms of mere moments but in a time frame that literally extends to the end of time.

Earlier in the 4th chapter of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus told a parable of the sower and the seed. Many seeds do not take root, but some seeds fall on rich soil and produce fruit yielding thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold (Mk 4:8). While Matthew and Luke tell a similar parable, only Mark tells this parable about the seed's growth. Jesus emphasizes "the power of the seed to grow of itself without human intervention. Mysteriously it produces blade and ear and full grain. Thus, the kingdom of God initiated by Jesus in proclaiming the word develops quietly yet powerfully until it is fully established by him at the final judgment" (Note to Mk 4:26).

Pope Francis described the beauty of nature in a similar way to Jesus. Natural ecosystems work in an ideal fashion: "plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants" (Laudato si 22). When we search for such a balanced approach, we are able to sustain growth, thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold.

However, when we are looking only for instant results, we can be quite dismissive of the holistic approach. In our wasteful culture, we use something once and toss it away. We exploit our environment and generate so much trash that our landfills are overflowing. With this short-sighted approach, we should not be surprised by the failure of man to control the chaos. We are foolish to "think that political efforts or the force of law will be sufficient to prevent actions which affect the environment because, when the culture itself is corrupt and objective [eternal] truth and universally valid principles are no longer upheld, then laws can only be seen as arbitrary impositions or obstacles to be avoided" (Laudato si 123).

Returning to the parable of Jesus, the kingdom of God develops slowly and quietly over a long period of time. The Apostle James develops this thought in the 5th chapter of his letter.

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You too must be patient. Make your hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not complain, brothers, about one another, that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing before the gates. Take as an example of hardship and patience, brothers, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of the perseverance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, because "the Lord is compassionate and merciful" (James 5:7-11).

We need to look beyond the horizon of our own short sightedness to the vast horizon of eternity with great patience. Our thoughts and actions will bear abundant fruit if we think beyond the moment to the common good of the community and the wider world.

God creates the soul for eternity. Let us follow in his footsteps. Let us sow seeds of sacrifice that we may act like Christ the suffering servant. Let us sow seeds of forgiveness to counter hurt and anger. Let us sow seeds of justice to bear the fruit of peace. Let us sow seeds of patience that we may grow in our "endurance to do the will of God and receive what he has promised" (Heb 10:36).