

## “TO WHAT SHALL WE COMPARE THE KINGDOM OF GOD?”

### SUNDAY ORDINARY 11 B

for June 14, 2015 – Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
(based on Mark 4:26-34)

*“The kingdom of God 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.”*

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

Words from our Gospel reading this morning.

Remember learning to read in the first grade?  
It probably began with a series of cards or posters:

A is for apple,  
B is for ball,  
C is for cookie,  
D is for dog.

And we would work so-o-o-o hard to learn those sounds:

*aa*-pple,  
*b*-all  
*k*-ookie  
*d*-og.

Once we learned to attach the right sound to its letter,  
we were able to identify groups of letters  
that formed words.

And once we were able to “sound out” words,  
We were able to enter the *incredible* world of reading –  
A whole new world of books and magazines.

Think how far you’ve come since  
“See Spot run” was the **height** of great literature!  
And then there were numbers.

First we had to recognize that 1 through 10  
represented specific amounts of apples, cookies, pennies.

Then we moved on,  
with the help of apple-pie tins, to fractions.  
The next time you struggle balancing your bank account,  
or marvel at the power of your laptop or tablet,  
remember that it all began with ten apples.

Remember the first time you met your spouse?  
Maybe it was a “chance” meeting  
with a simple “Hello”;  
a few awkward words might have been exchanged.

Then you ratcheted up your courage  
to ask that special person out on your first real date,  
and somehow, you connected –  
a relationship began and love blossomed.  
But it all began with that simple “Hello,”  
and with a few awkward words.

All of the great events and moments of life  
begin with small things –  
every great novel is written with the same twenty-six letters;  
every magnificent symphony is composed  
    on the same musical scale;  
every critical formula is a combination  
    of the numbers we learned in first grade;  
Every great love story begins  
    with a few awkward words of conversation.

From small and simple things,  
life’s greatest accomplishments are born,  
life’s most exciting journeys begin.

Jesus’ parable of the mustard seed challenges us  
to create the kingdom of God here, among us,  
    in the same way:  
humanity’s dreams of peace, community, and justice  
will be realized, first,

in the simple, basic and unseen acts of such goodness  
by individual men and women.

Such is “mustard seed” faith;  
that, from the smallest and most humble acts  
of justice, kindness, and compassion,  
The kingdom of God will grow.

Peace in our world must begin with peace in our homes.  
People and nations will be reconciled  
only when we cherish both reconciliation and forgiveness  
within our own families and among our own friends.

The justice of God will transform  
the major issues of our day  
only when those same principles of justice and mercy  
take root in our own decision making,  
in our own standards of morality and ethics,  
in our own approach to what is right and wrong.

I know that “mustard seed faith” is not always easy –  
we all tend to demand solutions to big problems immediately;  
we don’t have patience for the small and simple.  
Our contemporary culture convinces us instead,  
that bigger is better  
and the more complex the solution,  
the more effective it is.

But Jesus asks us to approach life  
with the simple faith of the mustard seed:  
that from the tiniest act of goodness,  
from the most hidden offer of mercy and forgiveness,  
from the most personal conviction of right  
in the face of doubt and ridicule,  
a mighty tree will take root,  
an abundant harvest will be realized.

It’s up to us to help create that harvest!