

Tuesday of the Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 13:18-21): Jesus said, “What is the Kingdom of God like? To what can I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and planted in the garden. When it was fully grown, it became a large bush and the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches.” Again he said, “To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened.”

“What is the kingdom of God like?”

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Today, the liturgical texts, through these two parables, place before our eyes one of the characteristics of the Kingdom of God: it is something that flourishes slowly —as a mustard seed— but, eventually, grows to offer shelter to the birds in its trees. Church Father Tertullian said it like this: “We come from yesterday and we fill everything.” With this parable, Our Lord encourages us in patience, fortitude and hope. These virtues are especially necessary for those who devote themselves to propagate the Kingdom of God. We must be patient, and with God's grace and human cooperation, wait for the planted seed to grow while profoundly embedding its roots into the good soil to gradually become a tree. In the first place, we need to have faith in the virtuality —fecundity— contained in the seed of the Kingdom of God. This seed is the Word; it is also the Eucharist that is planted in us through Communion. Our Lord Jesus Christ compared himself to “a grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies (...), but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (Jn 12:24).

The Kingdom of God, our Lord goes on, is similar to “yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch of dough was leavened” (Lk 13:21). Here also the yeast capacity to leaven all the dough is mentioned. This is what happens with “the rest of Israel” which the Old Testament mentions: the rest will have to save and leaven all the people. Continuing on with the parable, we only need the yeast inside the dough, getting to the people, to be like salt that preserves from corruption and makes all food have good taste (cf. Mt 5:13). Time is also of the essence so that it can carry out its ultimate function.

Parables encouraging patience and hopeful certainty; parables referring to the Kingdom of God and to the Church that are also applied to the growth of this same Kingdom in each of us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Let confidence and a lively Faith uphold the soul; he who believes and hopes obtains all things.” (Saint Teresa of Jesus)
- "The victory of the Lord is certain: his love will make every seed of goodness present on the ground sprout and grow." (Francis)
- “... It is right and good to pray so that the coming of the kingdom of justice and peace may influence the march of history, but it is just as important to bring the help of prayer into humble, everyday situations...” (Catechism of the Church Catholic, n 2660)