# Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

**Gospel text (*Mk* 4:26-34):** Jesus said to the crowds: “This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it 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. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come.”

He said, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.” With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

***“This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land"***

Fr. Faust BAILO
*(Toronto, Canada)*

Today, Jesus gives us two parables about farming: the parable of the scattered seed, and the parable of the mustard seed. These were images that people listening to Jesus could relate to, since most of them spent their days in the fields planting, watering and reaping. Our Lord told these parables using something they knew —agricultural work— in order to teach them something they did not know about: the Kingdom of God!

Indeed, Jesus teaches something about his spiritual Kingdom. In the first parable He says: “This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land” (Mk 4:26). And He introduces the second by saying, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God…? It is like a mustard seed” (Mk 4:30).

Most of us today have little in common with those farmers; yet these parables can powerfully resonate in our modern minds because we can still understand quite a lot about planting, watering and harvesting, and somehow, we sense through his words, that God has planted something in our hearts that will not

allow us to move completely away from him.

What is the Kingdom of God? It is “Jesus himself”, as Pope Benedict XVI reminds us. And our soul “is the essential location of the Kingdom of God”. God wants to live and grow inside us. If we seek God's wisdom and obey his commands, our life will become as steady as a rock and acquire a power that we can barely imagine.

If we patiently correspond to his grace, his divine life will definitely grow in the soul the way seed grows in the field or, as the medieval mystic, Meister Eckhart, has beautifully expressed: “The seed of God is in us. Given an intelligent and hard-working farmer it will thrive and grow up to God, whose seed it is; and accordingly, its fruits will be God nature. Pear seeds grow into pear trees, nut seeds into nut trees, and God seed into God.”

## *Thoughts on Today's Gospel*

- "The man without Christ is dust and shadow" (St. Paulinus of Nola)

- “Jesus' message about the Kingdom teaches its little importance as a temporal power, although it exercises a real and profound sovereignty over the souls.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The characteristic of the lay state being a life led in the midst of the world and of secular affairs, lay people are called by God to make of their apostolate, through the vigor of their Christian spirit, a leaven in the world” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 940)