



June 13, 2021

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #92B

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Psalms 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Mark 4:26-34

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

The mustard seed is a tiny seed that has the potential to grow into a large, bushy plant. When one considers a seed, the potential seems almost impossible—how can the potential of a plant be inside something so small? The Kingdom of God is like that mustard seed—it begins as something tiny but grows and expands into something quite large and substantial. The Kingdom of God encompasses so many people and we are all unified in Christ. This Kingdom isn't a place on earth, it is leading us toward the fullness of heaven. We are all called to serve God's people by building up the Kingdom of God, each of us in different ways.

Q FOCUS: *A little faith can blossom and grow into a great amount of faith.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On June 19, the Church remembers St. Romuald. He wanted to serve God and felt called to the religious life. He responded to God's call by founding many monasteries, building up the Kingdom of God throughout Italy. One of the most notable religious communities that he founded was the Order of the Camaldolese, which is a part of the Benedictines.

Church Teaching Connection

"The one people of God is accordingly present in all the nations of the earth, and takes its citizens from all nations, for a kingdom which is not earthly in character but heavenly. All the faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with each other in the holy Spirit. . . . Since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world (see [John] 18:36), in establishing this kingdom the church or people of God does not detract from anyone's temporal well-being. Rather it fosters and takes into itself, in so far as they are good, people's abilities, resources and customs" (*Lumen gentium*, 13).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 4:26-34

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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."

Read

Ezekiel 17:22-24

Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14,
15-16

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Mark 4:26-34

LIVING THE WORD

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 13, 2021



REFLECTION

The two parables we hear in today's Gospel draw our attention to the huge impact of something that seems so small. Human logic asks: "what difference will it make?" Jesus wants us to look at things differently. The mustard seed is small and insignificant looking. If you have ever felt small or insignificant, if you have ever looked at a complicated social injustice and felt overwhelmed by how big it is and how little you are, listen to what Jesus says about the mustard seed. While human logic might walk away from the cost-benefit analysis of "small efforts," God does not. In the Kingdom of God, small matters; effort matters; desiring goodness matters. Likewise, remember that while you and your efforts matter tremendously, not everything is up to you. Do your part: scatter the seeds. Let the Holy Spirit take it from there.



ACTION

Dorothy Day; a convert to Catholicism, was committed to Christ's model of pacifism, love, and care for the poor. In New York City during the Great Depression, she started the Catholic Worker newspaper with some friends, challenging Catholics to respond to local poverty. Readers inundated them with donations and volunteers, opening the first "house of hospitality" for the poor. And the movement spread, continuing today throughout the world. Whether through a Catholic Worker House near you or a local food pantry, determine what you can do to bring about the Kingdom of God in your own area. Start small.

"Don't worry about being effective. Just concentrate on being faithful to the truth."

—Dorothy Day 

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Do you ever find yourself tempted to dismiss the smallness of your faith or your actions?
- ❖ What mustard-seed-sized action can you do today to bring about the Kingdom of God?

► In what ways do you honor the gift of life given to you by God?

► In what ways do you honor the gift of life in others?

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 218.

Jesus demonstrated his divine nature by raising a child from the dead.

Having no concern for social and religious rules, Jesus holds the little girl's hand, despite the taboo against touching the dead.

We are all called to value life at all stages.

Act on the Word

The Gift of Life

You will need choose one of the activities below to do as a group. If possible, plan ahead so that you can do it this week, in connection to today's Gospel reflection.

Our culture inconsistently values life; Catholic history and theology requires a consistent life ethic. This means that we are called to respect of life from conception to a natural death. Following in Jesus' example, Christians are called to be a voice for the voiceless, care for those who are ill, and respect those who are marginalized. We are called to defend human life in all its stages and conditions. Choose one of the activities below or create one with your teens.

✳ Visit a nursing home or day center/respice ministry. Arrange for the teens to bring games, reading material, or just conversation skills, and share time with the elderly or disabled. Students may read to residents, play card games or board games, or do other activities with them that might already be offered at the facility. Be sure that medical professionals review hand hygiene requirements, illness restrictions, and safety rules with the teens before they engage with the residents or participants.

✳ Each year, many women and girls find themselves unexpectedly pregnant. To support women and girls in a difficult time, collect items for young families in financial distress. Items such as diapers, wipes, baby bathtubs, baby soaps, and other baby items are expensive and often difficult for struggling families to afford. Collect these items and arrange for them to be distributed to local food banks, the WIC office, pregnancy centers, and homeless shelters. See if there are any that your parish already supports and contribute to them. For safety reasons, do not collect car seats or cribs.

Closing Prayer

*God of abundant life,
your healing powers bring new life to us.
Guide the efforts of medical professionals
as they seek to diagnose and care for the sick.
Support us as we try to be present to those around
us who are ill or in need of support.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.

He went off with him, and a large crowd followed him and pressed upon him.

While he was still speaking, people from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer?" Disregarding the message that was reported, Jesus said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." He did not allow anyone to accompany him inside except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they arrived at the house of the synagogue official, he caught sight of a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. So he went in and said to them, "Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." And they ridiculed him. Then he put them all out. He took along the child's father and mother and those who were with him and entered the room where the child was. He took the child by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum,*" which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" The girl, a child of twelve, arose immediately and walked around. At that they were utterly astounded. He gave strict orders that no one should know this and said that she should be given something to eat.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

- ▶ Have you ever experienced heart-pounding, utterly terrifying fear? How did that fear make you feel?
- ▶ After the event ended, does that fear still give you pause?

Terrible fear can make a person feel sick and panicked, and it can affect all aspects of a person's life. Fearing for one's child is the worst fear parents ever face. Jairus faced this ghastly nightmare; his daughter was ailing and at the point of death. When at the

brink of death, people in Jairus' time did not usually survive. Desperation drove Jairus from his daughter's side. He sought out Jesus, knowing that he was the only person who could possibly bring wellness to the child. Upon their arrival, the little girl was found to be dead. The crushing feeling of loss that accompanies death would have weighed heavily on Jairus; he would have been overcome with anguish. He would have assumed that it was too late to save his daughter, and that the little girl was gone.

- ▶ Take a moment to think about a time in your life when you felt completely hopeless and how you reacted to people offering you comfort and support.

The power of God is not stopped by death, nor is it stopped by any other challenges we might face in our life. Jesus helps his disciples and Jairus' family understand this when he raises the little girl from the dead. Breath returns to her body, she stands up, and Jesus tells her astonished parents to give her food. To have command over the laws of life and death is something that only God can command. In this way, those who hear this Gospel reading proclaimed are assured of the truth of Jesus' divine identity.

Another remarkable aspect of this story is that Jesus disregards social and religious customs of his time. When Jesus brought the little girl back to life, he held the little girl's hand. This gesture was forbidden in the Jewish tradition of the time; a dead body was considered unclean. Such things weren't Jesus' concern; giving life and freedom were his concern.

- ▶ Have social pressures ever made you hesitant to ask someone for help, or even to give help to someone else?
- ▶ How can Jesus' actions in today's Gospel encourage you to go beyond social norms to act with mercy and love?

Jesus' primary interest was to give the girl her life, family, and community again. His gift to her was a life to live. This is what he desires for all his followers—a life full of the gifts of God. The gift of life has no comparison and there is no measure that can quantify such a gift. It is a gift that we have all received, and we are called to honor that gift.