



INTRODUCTION

Talk about planting seed of any plants or crops like *palay* or any kind of fruit trees
 How many months will it take for *palay* to get ready for harvest?
 How about any kind of fruit bearing trees like mango to bear fruit?
Palay seed is small, yet it can yield big harvest. Mango seed is small too, yet it can grow into a mature tree and can bear much fruit.
 Today’s Gospel talks about the Kingdom of God that grows like a seed of a plant.

Let us see what Jesus would mean by this.



OPENING PRAYER

The Kingdom of God has humble beginnings, growing within each of us as the flame of our faith is tended. Yet, once that small seed in us sprouts and grows, we shall find ourselves faithfully dedicated to the service of that Kingdom. So, we pray:
 Lord, make our faith in you big, that from small beginnings we may grow ever stronger in our love for you and those around us.
 Glory Be.

(adapted from <https://catholicdigest.com/amp/faith/daily-prayer>)



PHASE ONE
REMEMBER THE STORY OF JESUS

1.1 Proclamation of the Gospel Story Mark 4:26-34
Enthroned the Bible on a table with lighted candle)

A moment of prayerful silence
We will not be able to understand the Word of God unless God himself opens our hearts. Let us now welcome Jesus as he speaks to us through his Word



28 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the

harvest has come.”30 He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it?2,000 years ago. We have Apostle Peter as the first head of the Church and we are able to keep the apostolic . 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet

when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”
 33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

1.2 Brief Guided silent Meditation / Personal Prayer
Text in Context

Jesus is a great story-teller. He tells stories not for entertainment or to show his ability to communicate but to make his listener think and understand better his teachings? In parables, he uses ordinary things around to draw out important lesson in life.
 In today’s Gospel Jesus presents two parables focused on seeds. Seeds are small; the mustard seed is especially tiny. Yet, from these seeds a great crop of grain and a tree large enough to house birds in its branches can grow.

1. What does the first parable speak about? (The parable of the seed that springs up on its own?)
2. What is the title of the second parable? (The Parable of the Mustard Seed.) What does second parable talk about? (They both speak of the growth of the Kingdom.)
3. What does Jesus mean by “the kingdom of God” in these parables?
4. Why does Jesus use the seed in these parables to explain the Kingdom of God? (Seeds must be sown. It takes time for the seed to germinate and grow to fruition. Growth occurs bit by bit.)
5. What do we learn about the kingdom from the mustard-seed parable? (The smallest of seeds can grow into the largest plants. It takes time to mature and “put forth branches)

PHASE II REFLECT the Story
of the Church
(Teachings of the Church)



The kingdom of God is at the heart of Jesus’ teaching. Jesus works hard preaching, healing and making miracles. All his effort is pointed to the kingdom of the Father. Jesus ministers to the people of his time with love and compassion so that they may come to know and experience who the Father is.

The kingdom is made present where will of the Father is done and lovingly obeyed. Jesus does this all his life to the point of dying on the cross. The kingdom is Jesus’s passion. He has lived and given his life for it.

The kingdom is a great thing to talk about and yet Jesus used the image of a tiny seed to describe it.

The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how.

If we were one of the listeners of Jesus 2,000 years ago, we may ask a question like this:

A kingdom is a kingdom. It is big and ruled by the powerful. How could you liken it with a tiny seed?

Jesus has sown the seed of the kingdom. God the Father is active and alive in the very person of Jesus. Yet the people of his time did not take his teachings seriously. For example, people question who he is.

*"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46)
Is this not the carpenter's son? Is His mother not called Mary, ...? (Matt 13:55)*

Jesus' life on earth is the seed of the kingdom. We know his humble birth in a stable, in a village of Bethlehem. He grows up in a small town called Nazareth. Nothing is known about his family except that he is the son of a carpenter. Yes, he is called "teacher" but by those poor fishermen whom he has trained as his disciples. If ever he has friends, they are the neglected, sinners and outcasts of the community. This may all sound insignificant which is something not worthwhile giving attention.

We have also seen how the religious leaders of the rejected Jesus and wanted him killed.

Jesus ended his earthly life dying of the cross. In spite of this, nothing can wipe out all his teachings of the kingdom of the Father. His resurrection is even denied by those whose hearts are hard. But to those whose hearts are open, like the disciples, it has brought them new hope.

Yet, something is happening from the time Jesus came on earth (incarnation-his birth). While all remains hidden in the eyes of people, unknowingly, a tiny seed of the kingdom in the person of Jesus is coming out.

Jesus chooses the twelve disciples, who are seemingly ignorant of the faith, uneducated, and unpopular. But they have become new persons of courage and defender of the faith. They are the heroes of the first hour of spreading the Good News all around places saying:

Jesus is alive. We have a God who walks with us.

With the Holy Spirit, the small community of believers is formed – the Church.

God wishes all people to be drawn to himself. All people, believers or not believers, belong to the one Church, where the kingdom of God is alive.

At this time Covid-19 pandemic, who are those people we might consider insignificant. With our limited movements, who help us get our basic needs such as food, drinks, communication, health care? Have we forgotten the farmers, fishermen, market vendors, medical personnel and others who worked hard to provide our needs? Life has become difficult nowadays. When do we experience God's kingdom present at this time of pandemic in the midst of many people suffering?

The Catholic Church, is the largest Christian Church, with about 1.3 billion baptized members (against 7.674 billion world's population- 2019). We have grown in numbers. (though yet to be instructed and mature in the faith). We are proud to say that we are the only church today that can claim to be the one church founded by Jesus Christ succession down the centuries. Pope Francis is the 266th pope from the time of St. Peter, the first Pope. As a Church, we have been continuously providing charitable

works like schools and hospitals in different parts of the world ever since.

We have insignificant beginnings but surprising results not made by human hands but by divine power.

How do you feel being a member of the Catholic Church? How do you keep alive the faith handed down to us by the apostles?

PHASE THREE RESPOND – with/ in my personal faith /community faith story

We know that we, as Filipino Catholic Christians are celebrating the 500 years of the arrival of Christianity in the country. The First mass at the island of Limasawa marked the beginning of the tiny seed of faith that has now grown. We are 80 millions Catholics in the Philippines with numerous big and small churches where masses (Eucharist) are celebrated.

What do you think makes us true Catholics in the difficult situations of many families/ communities facing the "new normal" brought about by Covid-19 pandemic?



CLOSING PRAYER

Let us give glory to the Father
Through the Son
In the Holy Spirit,
For God has made us his people, his Church,
And calls us to sing his praises.

All honour and glory and thanks are his,
And praise and worship belong to him.
To God be glory in his Church
For ever and ever! Amen!

BACKGROUND FOR THE CATECHISTS

CCC 546 Jesus' invitation to enter his kingdom comes in the form of parables, a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough, deeds are required. The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word? What use has he made of the talents he has received? Jesus and the presence of the kingdom in this world are secretly at the heart of the parables. One must enter the kingdom, that is, become a disciple of Christ, in order to "know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven".

YOUCAT 89 How whom does Jesus promise the "kingdom of God"?

God wills "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). The Kingdom of God begins in those who allow themselves to be transformed by God's love. In Jesus' experience these are above all the poor and the lowly.

Even unaffiliated with the Church find it fascinating that Jesus, with a sort of preferential love, turns first to those who are socially marginalized. In the Sermon on the Mount, it is the poor and the sorrowing, the victims of persecution and violence, all those who seek God with a pure heart, all who seek his mercy, his justice and his peace, who have prior access to the kingdom of God. Especially invited are sinner also: those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners' (Mk 2:17)

