

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B: June 17, 2018



"This is how it is with the kingdom of God." What is a kingdom? Is it the brick and mortar that build up the castle? Is it the expanse of land a king can reasonably defend? Our notions of kingdoms may be romanticized in the modern era, but for the Israelites, a kingdom held deep historical meaning.

Thousands of years before the birth of Christ, the Israelites had asked God for a king. After the reigns of David and Solomon, the united kingdom dissolved into factions, and the land was conquered by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and, finally, Romans. For the Israelites, a kingdom was something to build, both structurally and civilly. While this had ended in ruin for their ancestors, many of Jesus' contemporaries longed for the restoration of an earthly kingdom.

Jesus' words in today's Gospel are a radical departure from this perspective. He compares the Kingdom of God to a field, but it appears that the farmer has little to do with its progress. "The seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord, the land yields fruit." Jesus introduces his followers to a new sort of kingdom, a kingdom where God provides the growth.

There is work to be done, of course. "When the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come." But for the Kingdom of God to flourish, there are certain things that are outside of our control. We sow seeds of kindness, justice, and integrity and then we must be patient. As shoots of faith appear, we nurture the growth with encouragement. As Christians, our task is not to build the Kingdom of God under our power alone, but to trust in the life-giving movement of God.

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Everyday Stewardship

You could buy a meal for a person who is hungry or for a person who just ate a feast. You could spend time with a lonely person or with someone who has more friends than you. You could step forward to join a parish committee that your experience and knowledge can help, or you can join a ministry where you will constantly struggle to figure out what to do. All of the above actions involve you giving and sharing yourself and your gifts. But not all of these actions will bear good fruit.

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If a sower sows seeds only on rocky or weed-infested soil, nothing of great value will grow. But if that same sower plants his seeds in rich soil, then the harvest will one day be great. In all of the soils, the seed is being sown, but it is not the act of sowing that is the most important factor.

In living a stewardship way of life, we must discern how best to share our gifts. Discernment needs the Holy Spirit and a desire to follow God's will, not our own.



Our own desires and misconceptions can cause us to use our gifts unwisely. The more mindful we are of how, when, and why we are sharing ourselves, the greater the impact for God's glory. God wants all of you, but not in a way that is without understanding and discernment. He wants you to shine as a light to the world through your stewardship just as He came to you as the Light of the World in baptism. You can't shine brightly if the match does not hit the wick.