

# Faith-a-Growing



*Faith as potent as a mustard seed*

## I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

### FIRST READING (Ez 17:22-24)

<sup>22</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD: / I, too, will take from the crest of the cedar, / from its topmost branches tear off a tender shoot, / and plant it on a high and lofty mountain; / <sup>23</sup>on the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it. / It shall put forth branches and bear fruit, / and become a majestic cedar. / Birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it, / every winged thing in the shade of its boughs. / <sup>24</sup>And all the trees of the field shall know / that I, the LORD, / bring low the high tree, / lift high the lowly tree, / wither up the green tree, / and make the withered tree bloom. / As I, the LORD, **have spoken, so will I do.**

**THE FOCUS: The Power of the Word**

### COMMENTARY

- Vv. 22-24 is a poem which serves as a conclusion of riddles and proverbs that form an allegory referring to the Babylonian king and how he manipulated everything that led to the punishment of a rebel king (see 17:1-8).
- Contrasting the two poems (vv 1-8 and vv. 22-24), YHWH is more powerful than the two eagles for the tender shoot he plants shall grow into a majestic cedar (v. 23), and much more the trees of the field will recognize the power of YHWH in tending and even eliminating trees (v.24).

### REFLECTIONS

In this poem, God deliberately declares His power over all creation and swears that the good plans he has for his believers will be fulfilled.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 92:2-16)

LORD, IT IS GOOD  
TO GIVE THANKS TO YOU.

### SECOND READING (2 Cor 5:6-10)

<sup>6</sup>We are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, <sup>7</sup>for we **walk by faith**, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Therefore, we aspire to please him, whether we are at home or away. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

**THE FOCUS: Living Out One's Faith**

### COMMENTARY

- Setting of the verses: the earthly dwelling or tent in contrast to the building from God (2Cor 5:1).
- So this tension between the bodily concerns and the spiritual longings we have now also presents the tension between the present and the future.
- At present we are like citizens in exile or far away from home.
- Paul says the Lord is our ultimate end. He is the distant homeland, believed in though unseen (v.7).

**REFLECTIONS**

Deep within the heart of a believer is the desire to please the Lord who is the power within, and this makes the present life worth-living.

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**GOSPEL READING (Mk 4: 26-34)**

<sup>26</sup>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 <sup>27</sup>and would sleep and rise night and day and through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. <sup>28</sup>Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. <sup>29</sup>And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come.”

<sup>30</sup>He said, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? <sup>31</sup>It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. <sup>32</sup>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.” <sup>33</sup>With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. <sup>34</sup>Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

**THE FOCUS: The Kingdom of God**

**COMMENTARY**

- The gospel reading consists of two parables. But there is only one point. Notice how it is worded in v 26? **How** does the kingdom of God work (action)?
- The first parable talks about the man sowing the seed on the land and then he sleeps night and day meanwhile the seed grows until harvest time comes.
- The second parables tells about the mustard seed that is sown and grows into the

biggest of all plants so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade (v.32).

- So both parables speak about the stark contrast between the smallness of the act of sowing and of the seed and the full great harvest and the greatness of the fully grown mustard shrub.
- The mysterious and hidden action of growing is brought about by God. The effects are definitely felt and are tangible.

**REFLECTIONS**

We have to trust in Jesus who has proclaimed that the reign of God is at hand. Its action is hidden and mysterious, but the effects on people and the environment will be life changing.

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**II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING**

The First Reading talks about YHWH’s decision to show His power over the land by planting the cedar that grows into majestic tree.

The Second Reading also focuses on the inner force as the faith in the believer of Christ, who tries to do good and please God.

The Gospel talks about the action of the reign of God in our world, our temporal world where the action of God already operates.

**III. OUR CONTEXT**

1. Why is it necessary that we situate God’s reign in the present? What do you think are the observable signs of its presence?

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