

A Kingdom Big Enough for All

Intro. The fifty days of Easter season are over. The transitional Sundays of Trinity and Corpus Christi are past. The church calendar now slips into Ordinary *Time*. Summer is here; school is out; and for the first *time* in over a year, there is the real possibility of a vacation; a day at the beach, the pool, the river, the springs or even the backyard with a good book or music and friends.

I. Today's homily is sponsored by your neighborhood landscape stores. It's time to get outside and work on your flower and vegetable gardens. The bible is a good source of many things, but I'm not sure we should follow the gardening instructions we hear today in the gospel. Growing a garden for flowers or for food for fun, this might work. But farming like this for a living would be a

disaster. On the way to visit St. Ambrose Church in Elkton, Tuesday, I drove through the farms there. In one field the workers were harvesting cabbage. It looked like hot, hard work. Some fields were quiet, resting between planting. Others were being plowed; while in others the rows for the seed had been carefully organized including the canals for watering. That to me looks like what good farmers do. In describing the kingdom of God, the Lord says "*it is as if*" a man scatters seed on the land and then goes to bed. As if each day he gets up and sits on his porch in the shade watching for the first green sprouts. The farmer doesn't know how it happens, but he is patient. Then at the right time takes the harvest. I bet some farmers would like that. No worry about storms, drought, hail or insects. Of course the Lord is not talking about a farm or one of

our gardens. He's talking about how the kingdom of God grows, seemingly on its own. The confusing part is that it can grow *without* our help or *despite* how we discourage the kingdom of God by our words and actions. His kingdom grows anyway. You and I cannot walk around our yards and gardens scattering seeds every which way and expect lots of vegetables and flowers to miraculously grow. Only God can raise a big harvest using the planting method in the gospel. That is the mystery of God's kingdom: *it grows in places it shouldn't and through people who don't seem to know what they are doing.* That includes us.

Concl. Our goal is the kingdom of God and not just the one called heaven. The Lord was also describing the kingdom of *God right here and now.* We know it's not heaven, but the seeds of faith scattered on us

by God have a mysterious way of growing no matter how we mess up. Green Cove Springs was a major crossroads along a trail of Franciscan mission churches from St. Augustine to Tallahassee. The seeds of faith were scattered all along the way. *We are here because of the mystery of how God's kingdom is spread. Our responsibility is "to imitate the farmer in Jesus' ... parable and watch for the wonders God is working – hidden in plain sight" [M. McGlone, N.C.R., 6/21] and be part of the harvest.*

To the image of the mustard seed: once it gets planted it grows like a weed, taking over everything in its path. That too is a good image of God's kingdom: sometimes it just grows wild.

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