



**THE PARABLE
OF THE SEEDS**
(MARK 4:26-34)

Today we have two similarly themed parables concerning the growing of seeds.

The first parable is about the seed that grows secretly. The farmer plants the seed and then forgets about it and goes about his daily business. Under very little supervision, the seed grows and thrives until the farmer returns and cultivates his crop. The growth of the seed is a great mystery and the farmer places great trust in the fertility of the soil to bring about the change in the seed. Likewise, Jesus sowed the great seed of God's Word and that Word continues to grow and flourish throughout the world. Like the farmer, we place our trust in the activity of God to spread the Word but the growth of the Word is still one of the great mysteries of our faith.

The story of the mustard seed is even more enthralling. The seed is so small and insignificant that it is almost invisible in the ground. And yet it has the capacity to transform into the largest of plants. For many Christians in the early church, the mustard seed symbolised Christ himself crucified, leading to the power of the resurrection (Bishop Robert Barron, www.wordonfire.org). Christ who came from humble beginnings will transform the world by his sacrifice on the cross and his rising from the dead. Jesus preached these parables so that the disciples might understand the power of humble beginnings. ■

LEARN

"Faith is like a bright ray of sunlight. It enables us to see God in all things as well as all things in God." (St Francis de Sales)



DO

Read the Gospel again this week and reflect on the faith of the farmer who plants the seed and then returns some time later to cultivate.

REFLECT

As I write this, it is rainy season in Northern Mozambique where thunderstorms are like nothing I have ever seen. Seed planting takes place now, and hundreds upon hundreds of farmers will begin their work of ploughing and planting until the shadows of the evening come. They plant maize, which is the staple diet for the whole country and even for a large part of Africa. I'm always intrigued by the importance of this planting stage of farming and the subsequent waiting that happens over many months. So much can potentially go wrong with the crops and yet the farmers will pray and trust in the growth of their plants, which will eventually sustain families and give life. I think what

I appreciate most is the faith of the people who believe that God will provide.

There are certain times during the Gospels when the disciples don't fully appreciate the gift of Christ's parables. This is perhaps one of those times as Jesus has to explain to the disciples in private what the message of the seeds is. But to ask anyone to place their trust in God, and to allow God to guide them, is a big ask! We like to be in control of our lives. Is it possible to hand everything over to God and say, "He will provide"? It requires great humility and trust to do so. The farmers who allow their seeds to grow and return later to cultivate know what it means to trust in God's work. ■

SAY

O Christ Jesus, when all is darkness and we feel our weakness and helplessness, give us the sense of Your presence, Your love, and Your strength. Help us to have perfect trust in Your protecting love and strengthening power, so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for, living close to You, we shall see Your hand, Your purpose, Your will through all things.

(St Ignatius of Loyola)