

## **Homily For Tuesday of the 30th Week of Ordinary Time - Year 1**

### **St Peter's 8:30 AM & 7:00 PM Mass - October 26, 2021**

**Romans 8:18-25** "Creation will be set free from its bondage to decay."

**Psalms 126** "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy."

**Luke 13:18-21** "A woman mixed yeast into three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

### **Romin' to the Kingdom**

#### **Introduction**

The few people whom Jesus was able to interact with personally were desperate to hang on to their hope of the fulfilment of God's promises in the Scriptures.

I feel somewhat certain that the earliest tiny Christian communities, shortly after the resurrection, could not imagine the sheer size to which it would spread and grow, and the world influence it would have.

For sure, the persecuted Christian community in Rome, to whom Paul writes, questioned whether their suffering had any purpose at all.

Well ... do we have anything in common with those who heard the words of Jesus? Do we have anything in common with those who huddled together for support when the Church was just a seed? Do we have anything in common with those members of the Church in Rome who were constantly bullied by the might of the ruling authorities? Do we? I think we do. The specific circumstances may seem very different. Our lives may look very little like any of those three communities.

However, through the eyes of faith, they should look exactly the same to us. We are scattered, appearing to be reduced in numbers, restricted in our gathering, ridiculed and cancelled in almost every public media environment. And now, everywhere we look, the message is that our lives should be ruled by fear. In the spiritual life, fear is THE number one illness, the number one cause of death.

Why? Because it cancels out love. But God is love, the source and sustainer of all

life! That's right, so this fear, this anxiety, this terror threatens to cancel out God's very presence in our lives.

## **Romans**

St. Paul describes an age of suffering as creation's labour pains, during which creation, believers, and even the Spirit of God groan, even while suffering shapes believers into the image of Christ. The spirit within us, in fact, expresses our own groaning. Tomorrow's passage from this most important of Paul's letters, includes his famous claim: "All things work together for good for those who love God." The hard part is that joining ourselves to the love and the redeeming power of the Son of God is also going to require suffering with him.

But, St. Paul reminds the Roman Church what they already should know, that sufferings of the present day, that persecution and fear and illness and alienation and loneliness and anxiety, will test us. We are, to use his powerful image, in bondage to decay. But we are God's children, animated and encouraged by the Spirit of adoption as his children. That Spirit of God cries moans with us, groans with us in our suffering.

If we look beyond this time like no other, we will truly see that suffering really is **nothing** compared to the glory of being a child of Christ. Perhaps you know people whose faith is so amazing that some terrible thing they are going through makes their faith even stronger. Maybe that's even you. Consider these moments or months or even years of suffering compared to an eternity of joy.

All creation is suffering because it is part of a fallen world, so even creation moans and groans under a sentence of corruption and death. But, even within that brokenness, we are invited, called, to share in the glory of the freedom of the children of God. We have the first fruits of that recreation in Christ. This is our experience in the midst of suffering. It is also our hope for an eternal future. Paul points out that we are saved by this hope. If we could experience it in fullness now, we wouldn't have to hope.

Centuries before, the psalmist understood this hope: "The Lord has done great things for us. Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.

## **Luke**

Speaking of sowing, not with needle and thread, but with seeds, Jesus works tirelessly to provide different kinds of images which will give insight into that joyful heavenly realm, to a people longing for a sign. These images will only inspire our hope if we let the spirit within us ask him in our prayer: "Lord, tell us about the kingdom of God."

The mustard seed was considered the smallest of all seeds. It is a metaphor for the small early Christian community, which ends up having an influence on the world far beyond its size and number, to the point that others will make their home in it. Billions have made their home in this magnificent bush, which came from the seed of God's redeeming love.

Christ is the seed, carried and given birth to by Mary. She bore within her that seed, which has become the greatest of all trees. Jesus is the most important and influential person in all of history. Imagine that, and we are his adopted brothers and sisters. With him, we cry out: Abba, Father. Be with your children. Be with us in our groaning.

The other image Jesus uses for the kingdom is yeast, which a woman mixes into three measures of flour and it leavens the whole batch. That yeast is the love that rises, expands, and becomes the Eucharist, bread for the whole world. Not much yeast was needed to cause a batch of dough to rise. So, like the parable of the mustard seed, the leaven is the measure for the Christian community. It is the Spirit which gives life. And who is the woman in the parable? This is the Christ figure. She is the one mixes and cares for and watches over the kingdom as it rises.

### **Call to Action**

Christ is a seed. Christ is a woman. The kingdom of heaven will not be broken by fear. Do not let fear be your leaven. Let the Spirit proclaim your joy.

Deus pro nobis. God is for us. Do not be afraid.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *Turn to me and have mercy on me, O Lord, and take away all my sins.*

**Collect:** *O God, keep from us all that might harm us and grant all that works for our good.*

**Romans:** *The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We groan inwardly while we wait for adoption. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

**Psalm:** *The Lord has done great things for us. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.*

**Luke:** *Jesus said, "What is the kingdom of God like? It is like a mustard seed that someone sowed in the garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches. The kingdom of God is like yeast that a woman mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."*