

Homily For Tuesday of the 30th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Oct. 30, 2018

Eph 5: 21-33 "Brothers and sisters, be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Psalm 128 ". "

Luke 13:18-21 ". "

Intro

My university music professor was addressing us, his choral performance students on the first day of class. He wanted us to think outside of our usual boxes and asked us, "where do we get music from?" In his hand he held a piece of paper that was obviously sheet music. He brought it slowly to his ear only silence. His point was that symbols on a page don't make music. Something more needs to happen.

Theme

We revere the bible but, if it remains word symbols on a page, it cannot be fully experienced as the Word of God. How are we hearing that living Word of God, Jesus himself, telling us about the kingdom of God, urging us to seek it and to live and breathe its rich life giving air? Jesus constantly gives insight into heaven, into the Father himself, into the Spirit which gives life. Have you ever wondered how Jesus figures out what images to use? Does he work late at night, like a priest or deacon preparing a homily, making a list of the things to which he could compare the Kingdom of God: The kingdom of God is like a cat, a soldier, a cloud in the sky, an old man, a good meal? And then you would see the ones he crosses off until he gets the ones we are familiar with?

No, there is something more. And every once in awhile, we need to lift these words off the page and, as the T.S. Elliott poem goes, to see them for the very first time. I had an experience that did that for me about this particular passage. It was at the Drumheller Passion Play one of the first times I went, years ago. Jesus and some disciples, men and women, were sitting outside on the porch outside a home where, apparently, they had just enjoyed a meal together. They were

chatting, enjoying the evening air, when one of them asked him: "Tell us, Lord, about the kingdom of heaven. And the man playing Jesus, looking around, said "How shall I talk about the kingdom of God?" ... and noticing the bush next to him, picked something off the bush, saying, "it is like a mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, which grew up into a tree, and the birds of the air made their nest in it." It's a simple, but understandable, image. The kingdom starts out small ...

Yes, it's like a mustard seed. Yes, it is like yeast mixed in with flour. Yes, it is like a found coin. Yes, it's like a pearl found in a field. It's all those things and more. Ultimately, if we keep letting the Word of God live in our hearts, we will see glimpses of the kingdom of heaven everywhere we look. In every nature scene and in every relationship, there are signposts pointing "this way" to understanding the kingdom.

I don't know if you have noticed, but our culture has stopped asking about the kingdom of heaven. It is almost as if all there is now are the words on the page and no one left to sing the heavenly music. Tragically, more and more don't even know about the words on the page. On the other hand, when they hear that Paul tells wives to be subject to their husbands, they love to say that Christians believe in making women inferior. They don't read how today's passage from Ephesians starts with husbands and wives being subject to one another, and that 80% of the passage is about the ways that a husband must love his wife: as much as his own body, as much as Christ loved the Church, sacrificing himself, holding nothing back. These are images of the kingdom of God itself that we bring to life, in imitation of Jesus, who made the kingdom real in his own body, and wants to do so again and again in his body, the Church.

Call To Action

The Kingdom of God cannot come to those who do not want it, who do not realize that the longing in us is not, ultimately, for the things that this world offers. The birds making nests are us, called to participate in God's own blessed life, for which we were created. We have to start asking the question more earnestly: "Lord, tell us about the kingdom of heaven." We have to start living as if we believe in it. And like yeast mixed with flour, we have to start witnessing to a spiritually starved

culture that there is a kingdom. Ultimately, it is like nothing we can imagine but everything we can long for, and it is reflected everywhere we look.