

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed  
that is the smallest of all the seeds.  
But once it is sown, it springs up  
and becomes the largest of plants.

MARK 4:31-32



ELEVENTH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME



JUNE 13, 2021



## Feast of Faith

### The Preparation of the Altar

The altar is the focal point of our churches. It is a sign of Christ in our midst; indeed, it has been said that “the altar is Christ” (Dedication of an Altar, 4). The altar is a table “on which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in mystery throughout the ages until Christ comes”; but it is also the place for a festive meal: “a table at which the Church’s children assemble to give thanks to God and receive the body and blood of Christ” (Dedication of an Altar, 4).

Both these functions of the altar are clear in the rites for the preparation of the altar that follow the general intercessions, which remind us of the preparations we make at home for a festive meal. The deacon or altar servers come forward and, bowing, place a cloth known as a corporal (from the Latin for “body”) over the altar cloth. They place the chalice, the cup to be used in the celebration of the Eucharist, and the Sacramentary or Roman Missal, which contains the prayers of the Mass, on the altar. These reverent preparations help us to focus on what is about to happen: the sharing of a holy meal, a solemn sacrifice.


—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

## Readings for the Week

<b>Monday:</b>	2 Cor 6:1-10; Ps 98:1, 2b, 3-4; Mt 5:38-42
<b>Tuesday:</b>	2 Cor 8:1-9; Ps 146:2, 5-9a; Mt 5:43-48
<b>Wednesday:</b>	2 Cor 9:6-11; Ps 112:1bc-4, 9; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
<b>Thursday:</b>	2 Cor 11:1-11; Ps 111:1b-4, 7-8; Mt 6:7-15
<b>Friday:</b>	2 Cor 11:18, 21-30; Ps 34:2-7; Mt 6:19-23
<b>Saturday:</b>	2 Cor 12:1-10; Ps 34:8-13; Mt 6:24-34
<b>Sunday:</b>	Jb 38:1, 8-11; Ps 107:23-26, 28-31; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Mk 4:35-41

saint snippets

June 19



Empty yourself completely and sit waiting, content with the grace of God.

**St. Romuald**  
11th-century Italian nobleman who left his worldly life behind to live as a hermit. He founded the Camaldolese monastic order.

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## The Church And The Spirit

Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and all grace, and the Spirit is truth.

—St. Irenaeus

## God's Time

We either pay attention to or ignore “clock time” as we play in the summer sun and note the earth’s tilt and the lengthening days. We live by time. We reckon time in seconds and minutes and hours, or we use broader chunks like supertime and summertime.

God keeps another sort of time. God speaks to us of “saving time,” that is, the time of salvation. This sense of time is called *kairos*, and this time is always now, always present and available, always revealing, often surprising. This Sunday’s readings alert us to the reality and the import of God’s time. Ezekiel and the Gospel of Mark remind us that our labor and our plotting and our planning rest in God. For God takes our smallest efforts and makes of them great works. Paul points us to the “harvest” time, urges us to be watchful for its coming, and calls us to recognize that we must spend our time pleasing God.  
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## Saints and Special Observances

<b>Sunday:</b>	Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
<b>Monday:</b>	Flag Day
<b>Saturday:</b>	St. Romuald; Blessed Virgin Mary

## Today's Readings

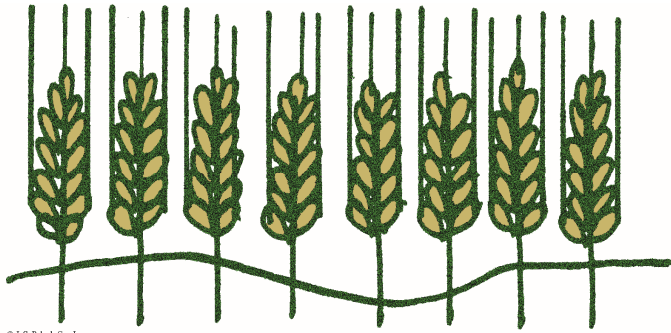
**First Reading** — I have lifted high the lowly tree (Ezekiel 17:22-24).

**Psalm** — Lord, it is good to give thanks to you (Psalm 92).

**Second Reading** — Whether we are at home or away, we aspire to please the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6-10).

**Gospel** — It is the smallest of all seeds, and becomes the largest of plants (Mark 4:26-34)

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## Eleventh Sunday In Ordinary Time June 13, 2021

They that are planted  
in the house of the Lord  
shall flourish in the courts of our God.

—Psalm 92:14

### *Treasures From Our Tradition*

One of the most visited churches of Rome is also one of the most beautiful: the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Like so many other churches, it was founded by the master-builder (or financier) Emperor Constantine about the year 315. Paul was martyred outside the walls of the City of Rome at a place called Tre Fontaine, probably on June 29, in the year 65, perhaps the first anniversary of St. Peter's crucifixion. Christians buried him in a quiet place about two miles away, and visited to pray. Constantine was running low on bricks, apparently, because the first church was tiny. In 386 it was demolished and today's basilica begun. This vast and towering space looks much the same today as it did in the fourth century.

The centuries have not been kind to ancient Rome, but until the early 1800s St. Paul Outside the Walls survived beautifully, perhaps because it has been assigned for nearly a thousand years to Benedictine monks. It was therefore a vibrant place of daily prayer even through the centuries when Rome was a poor and nearly abandoned city. In 1823 a great fire resulted from a botched repair job to lead on the roof, and St. Paul's was destroyed. It is said that the whole world contributed to its restoration, even the Russian czar and the viceroy of Egypt gave alabaster, malachite, and lapis lazuli for the pillars and the tabernacle. Several of the precious mosaics were able to be restored, bringing the ancient basilica back to life. One of the great treasures of the basilica is a set of prison chains, said to have been worn by the Apostle in the last days before his martyrdom. Unlike other Roman churches, St. Paul's stands in a garden-like suburban neighborhood, surrounded by stately palm trees, gardens, and parks.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

### *The Big Picture*

We hear about the Kingdom of God in many of Jesus' parables. Jesus must have gotten tired of trying to explain it, but he never gives up. In today's passage, he uses parables to describe how the kingdom will spread. What is interesting is that these parables are not so much about our actions as they are about how God builds his kingdom.

Let's start with the second parable: Jesus exaggerates a little, with the mustard seed being the smallest seed and the bush being the largest plant. His point is that the kingdom may look small at first, but it will keep growing. The image of all the birds coming to the branches is taken from Old Testament passages, in Daniel and Ezekiel, about other people coming into Jerusalem to worship the one LORD. Jesus implies that the growing kingdom will attract outsiders to be members. The main point is not to be discouraged when it seems the kingdom is not growing: We might be limiting it to people who think and act just like ourselves. We might see attendance at church in our parish declining. So Jesus is reminding us to think of the bigger picture.

In the first parable about the man who scattered seeds, Jesus says that those seeds produce a harvest, even though the farmer doesn't know how or why those seeds can grow. We too can be doing things that help the Kingdom to grow, without knowing how we are helping. The obvious example is prayer: We may not see the results of our prayer, or not know if God is answering our prayer. But God is making the kingdom grow in his own way and in his own time. Like the farmer, we can help it grow by loving each other, teaching our children about Jesus, caring for the poor and the sick.

If the farmer were to let weeds choke his crop, or be stingy with his seeds, he might not have a very good harvest. We can be stingy with our love, or hurt people with our anger. Then we would be slowing the growth of the kingdom. So let us always be aware of the kingdom, and ask God to move us to do whatever we can to help it grow.

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## ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



JUNE 13, 2021

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### THE CHURCH AND GOD'S KINGDOM

Today's scriptures connect the towering cedars of Lebanon from the prophet Ezekiel to the mustard plant of the famous parable of Jesus. Both plants represent the Kingdom of God. Both are also to be understood as symbols of the Church, where "birds of every kind shall dwell" (Ezekiel 17:23) and shelter in the cedar's branches, and the shade of the mustard plant's large branches provide dwelling for the "birds of the sky." Even today's psalm tells of the just one who is like a cedar flourishing in the house of the Lord. Now, the Church is not the Kingdom, but rather a sacrament, a visible sign of it. They co-exist in the here-and-now but also in the "not yet." As Paul reminds us, we must constantly work to continue building and growing the Kingdom by everyday good works of "the just one." So we are all birds and just ones.

#### "LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD . . ."

The Gospel of Mark is nothing if not a testament to the power of parables to illustrate the Good News through story. Jesus was a master storyteller, who understood the importance of using images and concepts to which his listeners could relate. A seed, a mustard plant, would symbolize one of Mark's signature focuses: the Kingdom of God.

Centuries earlier, the prophet Ezekiel proclaimed most poetically to the Israelites, recently liberated from Babylonian captivity, that their God was still their hope, their comfort, their rescue, and their shelter. Those refugees would understand the image of the towering cedar as a symbol of their kingdom, cut down, fallen, captured. By restoring their kingdom, their God was giving them a new creation (the replanted shoot) and a new covenant.

#### THY KINGDOM COME . . .

Ezekiel said that God would tear off "a tender shoot" (17:22) for this replanting. What does this sound like? Why, Advent, of course, and specifically the words of the prophet Isaiah: "A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom" (Isaiah 11:1); and again in Isaiah's Messianic texts we hear: "He grew up before us like a tender shoot" (53:2). Jesse was the father of the great king David and, as we know, Jesus came to be that tender shoot, that blossom, the new Davidic King whose throne, the cross, was once a tree.

God's incarnation in Jesus, born fully human, is the fulfillment of the promise to Ezekiel of the renewed and restored cedar, the new Kingdom. That new creation and covenant exists for us in the Church, through the Holy Spirit making the seed planted within us grow, flourish, and spread. Thus we have the faith and courage to be that visible sign of the Kingdom bringing hope and renewal to the world. We must live Kingdom lives before we can convince others to do so.

#### TODAY'S READINGS

Ezekiel 17:22-24  
Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16  
2 Corinthians 5:6-10  
Mark 4:26-34

# Prayer of the Faithful

**We walk by faith and not by sight, and so we bring the needs of the world to the One in whom our faith resides.**

**For Pope Francis as he continues in his ministry, teaching with words and examples that all can readily understand, let us pray to the Lord.**

**For leaders in our nation and the world to recognize their important role in caring for God's creation, so that there may yet be good land and water for generations to come, let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all the Church's missionaries, who plant the seeds of God's word in all kinds of conditions, and especially for their safety, let us pray to the Lord.**

**For safety from the storms and floods of summer and other natural disasters, let us pray to the Lord.**

**For our community of faith as we persevere in our prayer and good works, trusting God who brings great blessings from small beginnings, let us pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from COVID-19, and for all who have died, especially N., N., and N., let us pray to the Lord.**

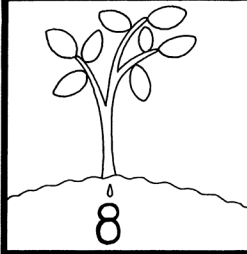
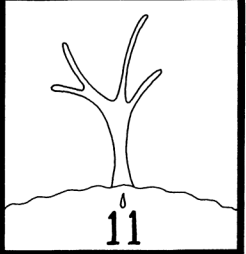
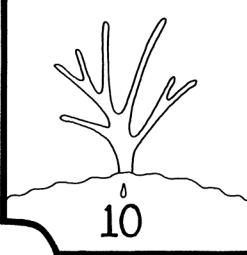
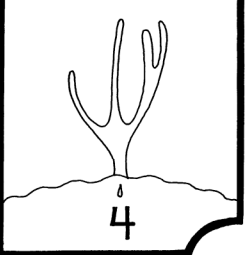
**For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.**

**O God of all creation,  
you have dominion over all you have made,  
bringing low the high tree, lifting high the lowly tree.  
Bring to fruit the word you have planted in us,  
and graciously grant all these our prayers  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.**



# God's Word for Children

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed (see Mark 4:30-34 in your Bible).  
 Even though it is the smallest seed, it grows to be the largest plant.  
 Let's remember to be good "gardeners" and help God's kingdom grow.  
 Read the number under each seed.  
 Then draw that many leaves on the plant stem above it.  
 The first one is done for you.

 8	 11
 10	 4

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## Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians (5:7), Paul writes about walking in a certain way. To find what that is, color the second footprint, then every other one after that.  
 The remaining footprints will tell how we should all walk.

You	We	never	walk
them	by	then	faith
later	not	can	by
try	sight		

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