

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you; be my help.  
Do not abandon or forsake me, O God, my Saviour!

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

O God, strength of those who hope in you,  
graciously hear our pleas,  
and, since without you mortal frailty can do nothing,  
grant us always the help of your grace,  
that in following your commands  
we may please you by our resolve and our deeds.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Ezekiel 17:22-24

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel.

The Lord says this:

"From the top of the cedar,  
from the highest branch I will take a shoot  
and plant it myself on a very high mountain.  
I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel.  
It will sprout branches and bear fruit,  
and become a noble cedar.  
Every kind of bird will live beneath it,  
every winged creature rest in the shade of  
its branches.  
And every tree of the field will learn that I,  
the Lord, am the one  
who stunts tall trees and makes the low  
ones grow,  
who withers green trees and makes the  
withered green.  
I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do it."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 91

Response:

It is good to give you thanks, O Lord.

1. It is good to give thanks to the Lord  
to make music to your name, O Most  
High,

to proclaim your love in the morning  
and your truth in the watches of the  
night. (R.)

2. The just will flourish like the palm-tree  
and grow like a Lebanon cedar. (R.)
3. Planted in the house of the Lord  
they will flourish in the courts of our God,  
still bearing fruit when they are old,  
still full of sap, still green,  
to proclaim that the Lord is just.  
in him, my rock, there is no wrong. (R.)

**SECOND READING 2 Corinthians 5:6-10**

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to  
the Corinthians.

We are always full of confidence, when we  
remember that to live in the body means  
to be exiled from the Lord, going as we  
do by faith and not by sight - we are full of  
confidence, I say, and actually want to be  
exiled from the body and make our home  
with the Lord. Whether we are living in the  
body or exiled from it, we are intent on  
pleasing him. For all the truth about us will  
be brought out in the law court of Christ, and  
each of us will get what he deserves for the  
things he did in the body, good or bad.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

I call you friends, says the Lord,  
because I have made known to you  
everything I have learnt from my Father.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Mark 4:26-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Mark.

Jesus said to the crowds, "This is what the  
kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed  
on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps,  
when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and  
growing; how, he does not know. Of its own  
accord the land produces first the shoot, then  
the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And  
when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he  
starts to reap because the  
harvest has come."

He also said, "What can we say the  
kingdom of God is like? What parable can  
we find for it? It is like a mustard seed which  
at the time of its sowing in the soil is the  
smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once  
it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of  
them all and puts out big branches so that  
the birds of the air can shelter in its shade."

Using many parables like these, he spoke  
the word to them, so far as they were capable  
of understanding it. He would not speak to  
them except in parables, but he explained  
everything to his disciples when they were  
alone.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,

the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O God, who in the offerings presented here  
provide for the twofold needs of human  
nature,

nourishing us with food  
and renewing us with your Sacrament,  
grant, we pray,

that the sustenance they provide  
may not fail us in body or in spirit.

Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

There is one thing I ask of the Lord, only this  
do I seek:  
to live in the house of the Lord all the days  
of my life.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

As this reception of your Holy Communion,

O Lord,  
foreshadows the union of the faithful in you,  
so may it bring about unity in your Church.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



**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](http://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**

**A**s 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)