

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A lectionary-based session adapted from 'Breaking Open the Word of God: Resources for Using the Lectionary for Catechesis in the RCIA – Year A', edited by K.M Hinman & J.P Sinwell, Paulist Press, 1986)

Readings:

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

Romans 8:26-27

Matthew 13:24-43

Opening Prayer:

Almighty and ever-living God,
your Spirit make us your children,
confident to call you Father.
Touch our hearts;
help them grow toward the life you have promised.
Touch our lives;
make them signs of your love for all.
Above all, Father,
may we love you in all things
and above all things,
and reach the joy you have prepared for us
beyond all imagining.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son.
Amen.

or

O God, your sea is so great
and my boat is so small.
yet, like the mustard seed that grows
to support a sturdy bush,
you promise me growth
and support, also.
Help me to understand that,
though my boat is small,
with your help I can make a difference.
Through the Spirit I can be a light to the world.
Amen.

Listen to the song: 'Abba, Father', Rev. Carey Landry <https://youtu.be/9mDhpQSzEfM>

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Share/Journal your reflections:

1. Slowly read Matthew 13:24-43. Re-read it, but this time underline/circle/highlight any words and/or phrases that stand out. Make notes saying why you underlined it or thoughts you may have about the words.
 - What does this passage say to you about the end times?
2. Think of a situation that is a modern-day parallel to the parable of the mustard seed and the leaven. Jot it down.
3. How has God been the leaven in your life this past week?
4. Think of someone who has been a positive influence in your life. What about that person has made him or her "leaven" in your life?



Looking at Gospel themes: choose either 1 or 2

1. What does the Catholic Church teach about the end times? What does this say about how I am to live?
 - i. The end times will be times of completion, not of destruction.
Read the following passages, jotting down their teaching content:
 - a) Vatican II, The Church in the Modern World #39
 - b) Phil 1:6
 - c) Rom 8:38-39
 - ii. Christ will appear in judgement.
Read the references below in light of the parable and judgement.
 - a) John 5:25-30
 - b) Matt 25:31-46
 - iii. How must I live in order to foster the coming of the kingdom? Use the following “categories” as a guide.
 - a) Be a person of hope.
 - b) Be a just person (matt 25:31-46). Give an example of what this might mean in your everyday life.
 - c) Be patient with sinners
 - d) Live out an understanding of the interdependence of the body of Christ; none of us will fully arrive until we all arrive.
 - iv. What is your belief in the end times? How do you live your life differently than the unbeliever? How is your life a statement about your beliefs of the end times?
2. Our modern world sends us the message that only big things matter. The story of the mustard seed tells us that small things can make a difference.
 - i. Remember and journal a personal story of how some small act made a difference to someone.
 - ii. Think about the symbol of yeast and how great things can come from small beginnings.
 - a) The kingdom began with only Twelve and has spread to billions in the course of history.
 - b) The seed can only reach its potential through the power of God. See 1 Cor 3:6-7; Wisdom 12:13, 16-19
 - iii. We can “tap” into God’s power through prayer.
 - a) Romans *:26-27
 - b) 2 Cor 1:11
 - c) Romans 15:13
 - d) Journal a personal experience of having received power (strength) through prayer.

GOING DEEPER: QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The whole of our lives may be seen as “weeds among the wheat.” As I prepare for the kingdom this week, what weeds in my attitudes and actions do I need to bundle up and burn? How will I do this?
2. Like yeast in the dough, God’s power is within us and radiates outward. It is in this radiating that the good news is spread. What evidence do I see that confirms the reign of God in my world today?
3. As a Christian, do I radiate this message of hope? Am I leaven? How can I better fulfil this role of spreading the kingdom?

CLOSING PRAYER

Imaginative meditation on Matthew 13:43:

Feel the warmth and radiance of the Son’s love. Imagine the warm feeling you’ve had as someone drew you close and held you.

See in your mind’s eye the Father beckoning you – his outstretched arms, his joy, his desire to have you join him forever.

Say the Our Father.

Listen to ‘Earthen Vessels’, John Foley SJ, <https://youtu.be/r0XieYiJD2Y>

or

‘Eye Has Not Seen.’ Marty Haugen <https://youtu.be/rRyOS0nZr7s>