

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B) 17th JUNE 2012

Today our readings return to the sequence for ordinary time.

We have had the extraordinary times.

We have celebrated Jesus 'Resurrection and Ascension when we rejoiced that he had completed his work on earth.

We have celebrated the Feast of Pentecost when we understood that the Holy Spirit keeps us in touch with Jesus every minute of every day.

We have celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi when we realised that Jesus himself is with us in the consecrated bread and wine.

We have celebrated the Holy Trinity which helps to explain how Jesus relates to God the Father in heaven and to the Holy Spirit active among us now.

Ordinary time is like the time after Christmas and birthdays when we can use and really appreciate the gifts that we have been given.

The gift that God has given us is the Gospel, the good news. This year our Gospel is St. Mark's, which we started after Christmas and stopped for Lent and Easter.

We pick up the story today with Jesus teaching about the Kingdom of God. He taught in parables, using things that people could see around them to make points about God whom people could not see.

Jesus spent much of his time outdoors and most people lived close to the sea and the countryside, so he used images from nature to make his points.

Gardens are parables in themselves. They illustrate many points that Jesus makes in his teaching. In today's Gospel Jesus makes two points.

Firstly he says that plants grow at their own pace. Trees bud, blossom and fruit in their own time

In the same way God gives us faith like a seed and causes it to grow in each person individually.

Just as some plants flower and fruit earlier than others so the faith of different people matures differently, some quickly, some more slowly, but the slowly maturing fruit is as valuable as the early, just as late apples are as special as early strawberries.

This implies a warning not to judge the spiritual lives of other people.

We have to be patient with them. We must respect the growing season for faith in each person.

Some plants look completely dead for ages but eventually they grow new green leaves.

People may seem spiritually dead but we do not know what the Holy Spirit is doing in them.

Jesus is saying: “Never to give up on yourselves or others.”

Jesus’ second point is that tiny seeds grow into large plants, even trees.

Our faith may seem too small and weak to achieve anything, but if we have the faith to let God work in us through his Holy Spirit, our little life produces something much greater, especially if we give ourselves to our families, our Church and our community.

Jesus taught in parables because he wanted people to think and understand what his teaching meant for their own lives.

The Bible begins in a garden and is full of references to gardens and plants.

There is Ezekiel’s cedar in our first reading and the psalmist’s image of the just person “still bearing fruit when they are old, still full of sap still green”, just like an old plum tree.

Let’s value our gardens and the wider countryside and use them to see how nature illustrates what Jesus teaches us in the Gospel about the way in which God works in our world to make his Kingdom come.

Rev Geoff Carey