

Spirituality of the Readings - Eat Up

In olden days farmers would sow seeds in their lands and then simply wait. When a crop was ready they would reap it, using a scythe (a “blade”).

A whole process then had to follow. The neighbours would gather with a farmer at each step, to help. They would collect each other’s crops into stacks, or “pooks” as they were called, so that by counting “pooks” each farmer could know how much grain to expect from his harvest. Threshing came next—separating the husks and straw from the grain—followed in the older cultures by “winnowing,” which detached the heavier grain from the lighter chaff.

Here is how an Irish friend of mine explained it to me, as we drove around Ireland. By chance it matches the first parable Jesus tells in this Sunday’s Gospel:

A farmer would ...

sleep and rise night and day,
and through it all
the seed would sprout and grow,
he knows not how.

Of its own accord the land yields fruit,
first the blade, then the ear,
then the full grain in the ear.



The grains were tiny morsels at first, but at the last, they presented a massive display, poised for harvest. The farmer and his friends modestly worked along with this mysterious process.

Jesus says this parable is about the kingdom of God. But he does not explain how.

It recommends modesty, for sure. We Christians must arrange ourselves humbly and trustingly, like the farmers, while the mystery takes place within our souls. And of course we need to “detach the husks and straw from the lighter chaff.” This would mean pulling ourselves away from distractions and fascinations that drag us away from who we are meant to be. Distractions such as impressing others, winning all the time, using God’s name in vain, criticising people ... fill out the list.

But the Holy Spirit of God plants seeds in our souls and quietly begins their growth. Followers of Christ must let the seeds grow at their own rate, and then go on to the next step only when they are ready. Our job had been to prepare the land, which is us, and then see the result that happens “of its own accord.”

In a second parable, the quiet status of a seed is apparent. Jesus says that the mustard seed is the smallest and humblest of all the seeds on earth. (In fact it was not, so I am told. Smaller still are the petunia, the begonia and orchid seeds.) But nevertheless, the tiny mustard seed, the size of a pinhead, unassumingly grows to be a great big shrub or even a tree that is taller than a man’s head.

So are we to be humble in a similar way. The Spirit’s plantings in our souls will seem exceedingly tiny, even unnoticeable. Our humility—like the farmers’ with the seeds— means waiting, or in other words, being patient. We are fallow lands. We must be ready and anticipating for something greater than ourselves, something the Spirit bestows.

This means that the “largest of plants” will not be you or me, but God—present in our lives and in our communities. Since God is great and to be loved above all things and within all things, since God is taller than a man or woman’s head, so to speak, then he is large enough to found our greatest plans or hopes.

Let us be fallow.

John Foley, SJ

*Fr. John Foley, SJ, is
a composer and scholar at Saint Louis University*

JUNE DATES:

Sunday, 13th June: Feast of St Anthony of Padua

Monday, 14th June: Queen’s Birthday

Sunday 20th - Saturday 26th June: Refugee Week

Tuesday, 29th June: Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

Today is going to be a really GREAT DAY!

St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bulletin



Parish Website:
Parish Facebook Page:
Parish Priest:
Assistant Priest:
Parish Pastoral Council:
Parish Office Hours:

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Email: springwood@parracatholic.org
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St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community Springwood
Fr Paul Slyney - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0418 461 316
Fr Shinto Francis - 4754 1052 **Emergency ONLY:** 0415 077 969
Email - springwoodppc@gmail.com
Tuesday to Friday 8.30 am - 3.30 pm

Weekend Masses: Saturday Vigil Mass 5.00 pm, Sunday 8.00 am and 9.30 am
Weekday Mass: Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 am

Rosary & Devotions: Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 am
Adoration, Rosary & Chaplet: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 7.30 - 8.30 pm
Intercession & Adoration: None until further notice

Baptisms: 2nd and 4th Sundays of every month - 10.30am and by appointment
Reconciliation: By request
Weddings: By appointment - restricted numbers
Funerals: By appointment - restricted numbers

A Poem to Sit With

*To what shall we compare the kingdom of God?
It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is
the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. (Gospel)*

California Poppies

God is
the self’s structure

nothing
can be taken away

emptiness
is fullness

the proof is
the deed
colour form
fragrance

hidden
in seed

blessing
the desert

flowering

Peace.

J.Janda

THE GOSPEL

Mark 4:26-34

*To what shall we compare the kingdom of God,
or what parable can we use for it?*

O
God,

like
the tiny
mustard plant,
give us your roots.

Dig down deep into our souls!
Storm into our hearts and minds!
Grow into so large a plant
that all of our actions
all of our ideas,
all our loves

nestle
and shelter
in your branches.

Make all of your people,
all of the birds of the sky and
all of creation dwell in our shade.

Anne Osdieck

Today’s Readings: Ezek 17:22-24; 2 Cor 5:6-10; Mk 4:26-34

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!

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 91:2-3, 13-16

R. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The seed is the word of God, Christ is the sower; all who come to him will live forever. Alleluia!

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.

Next Week: Job 38:1, 8-11; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Mk 4:35-41



Recently Deceased: Maria James, Noel Rupesinghe, Rachel Dias, Delryn Wijensinha

Sick: Lisa Vaughan, Susie Zinno, James Wallace, Mischa Damaguc and family, Margaret Day, Adam McCully, Christopher Coombs, Kate Moore, Luca Hurley **and all Private Intentions.**

Due to the strict privacy laws, names of the deceased and sick can only be included in the Bulletin with the express permission of the immediate family. Thank you.

Parish and Local Community News

HOUSE OF WELCOME FOOD DRIVE: The House of Welcome (HoW) food drive will end on the 26/27th June so it would be sincerely appreciated if you could please deliver your donations to the parish office prior to that date. The HoW's vision is to uphold the intrinsic dignity of each person by providing support and advocacy to empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised within our community. **Thank you for your generous support.**

CYP CALLED TO BE SAINTS TRAINING MANUAL LAUNCH: Catholic Youth Parramatta are excited to launch a new training manual "Called to be Saints" for existing and new youth leaders alike on **Saturday 19th June** at West HQ, Rooty Hill, from 1pm to 4.30pm. During the launch, a panel of experts will discuss youth ministry post-pandemic. Register now at parracatholic.org/cyp-called-to-be-saints

POSITIONS VACANT: Private Secretary to the Bishop of Parramatta – **Applications close Monday 14th June;** Secretary to the Vicars General – **Applications close Monday 14th June;** Parish Secretary (part-time) – Sacred Heart Parish, Luddenham-Warragamba – **Applications close Tuesday 15th June.** More details at: parracatholic.org/employment

KANIMBLA STRING QUARTET CONCERT AT ST FINBAR'S: On **Sunday 27th June** at 2pm, St Finbar's Parish, Glenbrook, proudly welcomes Kanimbla String Quartet, a string quartet based in the Blue Mountains. They enjoy performing a wide range of music, from classical repertoire to modern compositions, including local upcoming composers. Light refreshments will follow the concert. Entry is \$20 cash per adult, with accompanying children free. *All are very welcome.*

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE STREET STALL: Members will hold their **first Street Stall since June 2019** on **FRIDAY 25th JUNE** outside Priceline Pharmacy (Springwood town square), **starting at 8.30am!** Any donations of knitted or Crochet Goods, Sewing Items, Craft, Cakes, Jams, Pickles - **any saleable** items will be **gratefully received.** All profits go to various charities. As Covid-19 has prevented us from assisting our usual charities during the Pandemic, we would be sincerely grateful for any donations, making it possible for our branch members to help those much needed people who are struggling during these unprecedented and difficult times. Please contact Molly 4751 2167, Colleen 4754 4335 or Maureen 4751 1300 for further information.

LITURGICAL-SPIRITUAL FORMATION DAY: Fr Dr. John Frauenfelder, Liturgist and Dean of The Australian Institute of Theological Education, **Saturday 26th June**, 10.30am – 3pm. Fr. John will touch the question: How to actively participate in the Mass? For Catholics, the Eucharist is the source of Christian life and on the summit of worship. However, there is a perception that the "mass is done by the priest", while the congregants are reduced to sit, to stand and to pay. Yet, Vatican II teaches that all baptised are to actively participate in the Mass. Fr. John is a prominent Australian liturgist who serves not only as a priest, but also has a broad expertise in liturgy. All are welcome! Moming Tea and Lunch provided. Registration fee: Only \$5! For registration, please contact Julian Knouf on secretary@stfinbars.org.au.

SPRINGWOOD EAST TIMOR SUPPORT GROUP FUNDRAISER: Parishioners are invited to attend a wonderful initiative to support the **people of Timor Leste** who are suffering from damaging floods and expanding Covid-19 infections. Pam Chamberlain, an STA Parishioner, and long-time supporter of the East Timorese, is opening up her home to all who can come along to an end of financial year fund raiser for the Springwood East Timor Support Group. Bookings essential. Details as follows: **Sunday 27th June from 12 Noon**, 150 Singles Ridge Road, Yellow Rock. Cost of \$20.00 donation per head (BYO drinks) and payment upon arrival. Tea/coffee and a two course BBQ luncheon will be provided. Enjoy good company in a pleasant setting having a Sunday afternoon lunch – all for a good cause!!! **To BOOK IN, simply email** fazhouse@bigpond.com (for catering purposes only state numbers attending) **or call** Dennis Farrar 0425 209 840.

BIBLICAL STUDIES AT ST FINBARS: **Thursdays - August 5th & 19th; September 2nd & 18th**, always at 7pm. The Prophets in the Old Testament: Messengers or Whistle-Blowers? For the modern person, the word prophet falls almost entirely within the realm of prognostication. Names like Nostradamus and Jeanne Dixon, among others, come to mind - folk who claim (or the claim is made by others) that they can foresee the future. Prophets in the Bible do not fit neatly into this narrow category. To be sure, they made predictions, many of them quite striking. Nonetheless, their material was so diverse and wide-ranging that prognostication is too confining a term. During the four weeks, we will examine the prophetic books of the Old Testaments and study their cultural, historical, and theological contents. All are welcome. Gold Coin donation. For registration, please contact Julian Knouf at secretary@stfinbars.org.au.

THANK YOU FROM HOUSES TO HOME: **Houses to Home** recently received lots of beautiful warm and hand-made rugs. A huge thank you to the wonderful knitters at St Thomas Aquinas Parish Springwood. Celia, from CatholicCare Springwood, made sure the rugs got to us and we have been able to get them out to families who were very happy to receive them. Please send our thanks to everyone involved in the wool buying, knitting, sewing up and card making – the people doing the work and the rugs are just beautiful. *(As per email received from Louise at H2H).*

Glancing Thoughts - *The Kingdom of God is Within You*

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus says that the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. When it is sown in the ground, it is the smallest of seeds; but it can grow to become the largest of plants.

So, the kingdom of God can be very small, or it can change its size and become very big.

But why wouldn't the kingdom of God always be the same size?

To see the answer, you have to recognize that the kingdom of God isn't a peculiar kind of country. God's kingdom isn't a place at all. It's a condition, the condition of God's ruling as king.

But, we might think, even so, God's kingdom can't shift sizes. God's rule is always the same size: it's everywhere.

And yet this can't be right either. What is ruled by a king is governed by the will of the king. But how much of God's will does any Christian fulfill? Everything is subject to the will of God the King, for sure, but not every Christian who counts as being in the kingdom of God fulfills God's will completely now.

So *this* is the way in which God's kingdom can change size. When a Christian does what is against God's will, to that extent the will of God is not fulfilled in her. And so, to that same extent, the kingdom of God is small in her too. On the other hand, the more a Christian fulfills God's will in that persons life, the greater the kingdom of God is in it.

This is one way we can understand Christ's parable of the mustard seed, then. When a Christian first opens himself up to receive God as Lord, the Lord rules very little of him. And so the kingdom of God is like the littlest seed in the ground of his heart. But if only he lets that seed grow in him, if only he doesn't give up on himself as fruitless and despair of himself, then that littlest seed of God's kingdom will grow and grow in him till it becomes like a great tree in him.

In the end, though, here is the most important thing to see. If you have even just a mustard seed's worth of faith and obedience, you still have the kingdom of God within you.

Eleanor Stump

Eleonore Stump is Professor of Philosophy, Saint Louis University

Catechists (SRE's) are vital to parishes!

They reach out and share the love of God with children in our local public schools.

We would like to hear from anyone in our STA church community, who would enjoy being trained as a helper, or perhaps an SRE (Special Religious Educator) teacher. Our teacher manuals are easy to follow, as are the activity books.

If you have time on Wednesdays or Thursdays, and you would like to know more, please contact Wilhelmina on 4751 3319.

God works in mysterious ways: In kindy scriptures we can only go into the schools a few weeks after school starts, which gets closer to Lent and Easter. "My" kindies, who often do not know who Jesus or God is, start with learning who Jesus is, than they have to learn about him being crucified, raised from the dead, showing himself and having meals with his disciples, going back to His Father and sending the Holy Spirit - **all in simple language!**

So, after Pentecost, I started teaching the kindies about God creating the world. Bringing in my globe, pictures, and telling them about it all, I was pleased with myself, until a little one said, "I do not believe in God". "Well, that is sad", I said, thinking what else I can say, when she put her hand on my arm and said with a big smile on her face, not wanting me to be sad, **"BUT I DO BELIEVE IN JESUS"**.