

the way it unfurls determines the kingdom we end up with. If we plan a peaceful utopia, but try to get there by violence and coercion, we will end up with what Tacitus said the Romans had: "They build a desert and call it peace." If we want a future of prosperity, but our economic system is designed to enrich a tiny minority at the expense of the majority, then we will end up with inequality.

In a remark made to young people last year, Pope Francis told them not just to prepare *for* the future, but to *prepare the future*. The Christian life is not about responding passively to a future that is prepared by other hands, or determined by other forces. It is about actively preparing the future that we hope for, by striving to live as citizens of the kingdom of God.

A DIFFERENT VISION

One good example is how Catholic social teaching asks us to think about migrants and refugees. Our political conversation about refugees is dominated by the idea that there is not enough for us and for them: to protect our way of life, we need to keep them out. Catholic social teaching invites us to recognise that the kingdom of God is like the tree in Jesus' parable, or in the reading from the prophet Ezekiel: a place where every kind of bird is equally at home. And so it asks us to shape our treatment of migrants and refugees around a different vision: as Pope Francis puts it, "if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbour was born in my country or elsewhere" (*Fratelli tutti* 125). We are asked to recognise that migrants are neighbours in need, and to develop policies that reflect this challenging vision.

Mass text

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!**

FIRST READING Ezekiel 17:22-24

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**The seed is the word of God, Christ the sower;
whoever finds the seed will remain for ever.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Mark 4:26-34

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Holy Father, keep in your name those you have
given me,
that they may be one as we are one, says the
Lord.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Job 38:1. 8-11
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Mark 4:35-41

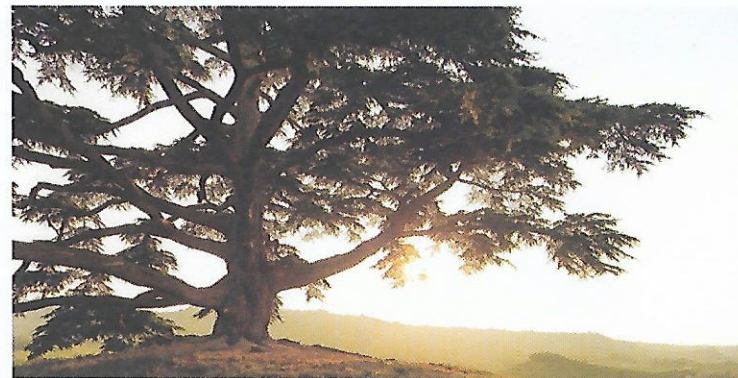


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SUNDAY BULLETIN



PREPARING THE FUTURE



Jesus lived in an era of intense expectation. The Judaism of his time was a ferment of different movements and messiah figures, many of them responding to the pressures of living under Roman occupation, with puppet kings ruling over them. Some thought the answer was to escape to the desert and live a life of purity, others thought the answer was to educate ordinary Jewish people about observance of the Law. Still others dreamed of overthrowing the occupiers altogether, as the Maccabees had done in 167-160 BC, and as another Jewish rebel group would attempt in AD 66-73, only a few decades after Jesus' death. The peasant people among whom Jesus lived also needed hope for the future: life was hard, with taxes adding to the woes of subsistence farmers and day labourers trying to find enough to eat from one day to the next. So, as Jesus describes what the kingdom of God is like, people are hanging on his every word. What will he say it's going to be like? And how can we achieve it?

Jesus' answer might have come as a surprise. The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, the tiniest of all the seeds, but which grows into the biggest shrub of all, putting out branches for the birds of the air to shelter in its shade. He uses another parable, too: it's like a seed that grows by itself, until it's ready to harvest. What can we understand from this?

I think the answer is to do with means and ends, or how we get where we're going. The kingdom of God is not a destination that we can reach by any means, like I can get to Newcastle by train or bicycle. The way we take to get there determines where we end up. A seed cannot become a large tree by any means: it becomes a tree by growing, unfurling according to its own internal logic, until it becomes a huge tree. Similarly, the "seed" of our ideas and

Building a civilisation of love



Dr Theodora Hawksley, a theologian working at the London Jesuit Centre, reflects on today's readings in the light of the Church's social teaching.

13 JUNE 2021

11TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III