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Uniting Word & World

For Sunday, June 14, 2015

**Seeds of the Kingdom**

## This Sunday's Scripture Readings

11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/061415.cfm>

Ezekiel 17:22-24

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Mark 4:26-34



If you read any of the accounts about American Pharoah last weekend, and the way he secured a place in sports history by winning the Triple Crown, you might have thought his triumph was inevitable.

But the man who helped raise him wasn't so sure.

Tom VanMeter, owner of Stockplace Farm in Kentucky, [remembers it this way](#):

He says at the time of American Pharoah's birth [three years ago], the colt was just "another nice big brown horse." "It's like saying that Michael Jordan was going to be a great basketball player when he was in kindergarten," VanMeter said. "You just don't know."

You just don't know when something small might defy all expectations. It's that way with horses. As this Sunday's Gospel suggests, it's that way with mustard seeds—and with the kingdom of God.

In Mark's Gospel this Sunday, we hear Jesus compare the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. It "is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth," he told his followers. "But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants."

An ancient writer, Pliny the Elder, once [described the mustard seed this way](#): "With its pungent taste and fiery effect, mustard is extremely beneficial for the health. It grows entirely wild, though it is improved by being transplanted: but on the other hand, when it has once been sown, it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once."

That may not be what many of us think the kingdom of God to be like—pungent, fiery, hard to control. But there’s also something wonderful and exciting about that description. Jesus described a kingdom that started small, but grew to a point where no one could contain it, and even the birds could build their homes in it. It is a place of great, limitless possibility—one that welcomes all.

And isn’t that the sort of place we’d like to call home?

As we slip back into ordinary time this weekend, and move further from the fire and fervor of the Easter season, it’s good to remember that sometimes what seems ordinary is, in fact, extraordinary. We need to remain alert to possibilities of grace—or even, perhaps, small miracles. They are the seeds of the kingdom. Who knows what wonders await?

More importantly: if the seeds of the kingdom are here, how can we help it grow?

Listening to the Gospel this Sunday, let us pray that we can help make God’s kingdom flourish here on earth—spreading the good news with our lives—and making that kingdom a welcoming place for everyone.

Dcn. Greg Kandra

## PRAYER

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Heavenly Father,

Pour forth your Holy Spirit to inspire me with these words from Holy Scripture.

Stir in my soul the desire to renew my faith and deepen my relationship with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ so that I might truly believe in and live the Good News.

Open my heart to hear the Gospel and grant me the confidence to proclaim the Good News to others.

Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.

In moments of hesitation, remind me:

If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?

If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?

If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

God, our Father, I pray that through the Holy Spirit I might hear the call of the New Evangelization to deepen my faith, grow in confidence to proclaim the Gospel and boldly witness to the saving grace of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

—*New Evangelization Prayer* © USCCB.

## NOTICES

### **PETER'S PENCE COLLECTION**

Many dioceses will take up the annual Peter's Pence collection to support the charitable work of the Holy Father on the weekend of June 29–30. The USCCB offers parish resources on their website at: <http://usccb.org/catholic-giving/opportunities-for-giving/peters-pence/collection/index.cfm>.

### **FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM**

The Fortnight for Freedom: Freedom to Serve will take place from June 21 to July 4, 2014. The theme of this year's Fortnight will focus on the freedom to serve the poor and vulnerable in accord with human dignity and the Church's teaching. For more information and resources for your parish, visit <http://usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/fortnight-for-freedom/index.cfm>.

### **2015 DIOCESAN INFORMATION SYSTEMS CONFERENCE (DISC)**

The 2015 DISC conference on Wednesday, June 17 to Friday, June 19 will be hosted at the Best Western of Alexandria Inn & Suites & Conference Center in Alexandria, Louisiana. This year's conference features presentations and hands-on training from industry experts and diocesan peers. Breakout sessions are offered in two conference tracks with content tailored to the needs of management and technical staff. To register, visit: <http://conference.discinfo.org/>.

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