

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2021

Sing a Hymn

Make the Sign of the Cross+

Read as introduction for this 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus proclaimed the nearness of God's kingdom.

Almost unnoticed, the kingdom is present among us,
growing and accomplishing God's will.

We gather today to give thanks
for the presence and love of God at work in our world.

Penitential Act

-to reflect on our sins and the need for God's mercy and forgiveness.

We are intent on pleasing God, St Paul tells us. Conscious of our own shortcomings, as well as of God's compassion, let us acknowledge our need of God's mercy.

Lord, your love is offered to all.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, your power is at work in our lives.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, your life-giving design will never be frustrated.

Lord, have mercy.

Recite the Gloria

Today's Readings

First Reading Ezekiel 17:22-24

The Lord has spoken – God will carry out God's word.

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

We walk by faith and not by sight.

Gospel Mark 4:26-34

This is what God's kingdom is like – and how it grows.

HOMILY FOR THE 11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 2021

Read by a member of the family for reflection and discussion.

"This is what the kingdom of God is like."

Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, was brutally martyred while celebrating Mass in March 1980. He had been outspoken in his condemnation of poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture used in the vicious war between left-wing and right-wing forces in El Salvador. In 2018, he was proclaimed a saint and martyr by Pope Francis,

who praised his ministry among the most poor and marginalised people. But Romero was not always feted by the Church. On the one hand, he found himself frustrated in his efforts by a large number of his own clergy who collaborated with the oppressive government; and on the other hand, his ministry was undermined by a Vatican policy which refused his request to condemn the government's violations of human rights.

It would be easy to portray Romero as a lone voice, powerless in the face of implacable odds. But in fact, by means of his weekly Sunday broadcasts to the nation, he was able to make sure that his small voice was amplified by being received and welcomed by the ordinary people of El Salvador. His single voice resonated in the seeds of hope it planted in the hearts of those who longed for a better future.

The ministry of Oscar Romero is itself a parable of the mystery of the kingdom of God which Jesus announces – the kingdom which encapsulates humanity's deepest hopes. Jesus' first parable today tells us that just as seed grows without the knowledge or activity of the farmer who sowed it, so God's kingdom will grow in the same unstoppable way. The seed has an inner dynamic to grow and become a rich harvest. It is a wonderful expression of the power of God at work in our world, irrespective of human efforts either to encourage or to thwart that growth. It conveys absolute trust in God's power to achieve God's purposes and realise God's plan, which is the flourishing of the kingdom in all its fullness – a kingdom of love, justice, peace and freedom. The parable contains a hope-filled promise: the harvest time will come. This image of reaping the harvest is drawn from the prophet Joel, who affirmed his absolute certainty that, no matter what, God's plan will be accomplished.

Jesus' second parable expresses a related truth about the kingdom. This time Jesus draws imagery from the prophet Ezekiel, who spoke of God's kingdom becoming like a mighty cedar towering above all others, offering protection and security to all peoples, represented by the birds of every kind which can rest in its shade. Jesus uses the example of the mustard seed to respond to those who question his vision of the future greatness of the kingdom he is ushering in. Although the kingdom has only small beginnings – rooted in the life and ministry of one man, Jesus – just like the mustard seed, it has the potential of greatness within it and can become the biggest of all shrubs, able to offer welcome to all.

Oscar Romero knew how to "broadcast" – to scatter seed, to disseminate hope – even in the darkest of times. He trusted that God's plan, God's preferential love for those who are poor, would not be thwarted. He shared the conviction expressed by Martin Luther King that the moral universe – we might say the kingdom of God – always "arcs towards justice", even if, like the farmer, we do not understand how that happens. And he believed that the kingdom of God offers welcome to all – no

matter how small or marginalised they might be. Romero knew that he had his own small part to play in scattering the seed, but he had the assurance that, ultimately, the work – and the victory – belong to God alone. This was the basis of his confident hope.

His famous prayer sums up the part each one of us is called to play in the growth of the kingdom: “The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, but also even beyond our vision... We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise... We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well... We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.”

Summary

1. Oscar Romero was a single voice planting seeds of hope in time of real darkness. His life exemplifies the kingdom of God, which, once planted, grows inexorably.
2. Despite small beginnings, the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus grows until all people can find shelter in it.
3. We each have our part to play in Christ’s work of growing God’s kingdom of love, justice, peace and freedom.

Recite the Creed

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader of the Family:

God wants every creature to find rest and security in the kingdom.
As we look for the coming of that kingdom in its fullness,
we pray for the needs of all peoples.
We pray to the Lord...

Member of the Family:

We pray for the Church:

that we may work with renewed confidence
for the inbreaking of the kingdom into our world
and into our lives.
We pray to the Lord...

We pray for all nations:

that peace based on justice may abound,
so that every person may flourish,
and none be excluded.
We pray to the Lord...

We pray for Muslims and others experiencing shock and grief over the murder of the family in London, Ontario. We pray to the Lord...

We pray for the protection of the right to religious freedom, and an end to religious intolerance, discrimination, and persecution. We pray to the Lord...

We pray for those who cannot see the kingdom, or who are threatened by its values: that eyes may be opened, and hearts converted to see the hope and the beauty of God's vision for humanity.

We pray for those who are discouraged or who are persecuted for their faith in Christ: that they may have a fresh experience of the reality and the power of God's love at work among us.

We pray for those who have died: that they may enter into the fullness of life in the kingdom, with Mary and all the saints.

Leader of the Family:

We thank you, Father,
for inviting us to be co-workers in your kingdom.
Give us the gifts of courage,
perseverance and compassion in our work.
We ask you to hear our prayers,
through Christ our Lord. Amen!!!

Sing a Hymn

Recite the Our Father

Each member of the family to say what they are thankful for.

Make the Sign of the Cross

Sing a Hymn