

THE PARABLE OF MUSTARD SEED

READ: MARK 4:26-34

1. Which part of the scriptures did you feel God spoke to you the most? What was it that spoke to you the most?
2. What are some things you can do to help you trust God amidst the mysteries of life? In what ways can the Parable of the Growing Seed deepen our trust?
3. Can you name a time when you have seen tiny seeds sprout in unexpected ways?
4. How does this parable encourage you to wait patiently for the harvest? What areas of your life require more patience and trust in God's timing?
5. It can be disheartening to observe current world events. How does the growth of a seed reflect God's work? How can we become more attuned to God's presence in our world?
6. The Mustard Tree provided "shade" to all the birds in the garden. What do you think it means for the Kingdom of God to offer shade to the "birds"? In what ways can you provide shade to those around you?

SELF-REFLECTION: EXAMEN EXERCISE

St. Ignatius taught that gratitude was among the highest virtues and that ingratitude was the root of all sin, as sin is the misuse of God's gift to us. A grateful person will not misuse God's gift. This examen helps us to recognise the gifts God has given and how he is working in our lives even when we do not see him working. This examen is especially helpful when we are feeling down, having a bad day, or being unusually self-critical.

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SELF-REFLECTION: EXAMEN EXERCISE

Prepare: Pray the Our Father

Ask God to reveal, in a special way today, all the blessings of your life—the really big ones and the small ones, too. Ask yourself, “What am I most grateful for today? What is it that fills me with joy and gratitude?” Name this gift before God: “Lord, I am so grateful for your gift to me of ___.” Repeat all the gifts and blessings that you have received from the Lord and feel the gratitude.

Reflect on your relationship with God. Talk to God about it. How is our relationship going? Have we been getting along well? Do I feel close to or distant from God right now? Have you spent quality time with God, or have you been neglectful? Do you get a sense that God is very close to you when you call on him? Are you bored with God? When you look upon the “face” of God, do you feel joy? Gratitude? Shame? Fear? Speak with God about your relationship. Ask Him to reveal his perspective on your relationship.

Ask God, “What would you like me to do about our relationship as we move forward? What gradual shifts might you initiate? What parts of the relationship might you nurture? Which parts might you let go of or even put a stop to? Ask God, “What specifically can I do tomorrow regarding our relationship?” If appropriate, commit to God about how you may proceed in the future of your spiritual relationship. Ask God for help in keeping this commitment.

Close in Prayer
