

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ: Grace and peace!



In his high school days, my father was a skilled soccer player and upon becoming a parent, wanted his two sons to grow up with his playing abilities. Little by little, Dad started training us by throwing the balls to us and having us kick it back to him. Although we did not treat it too seriously, with time we both became used to kicking and playing soccer independently. These are the type of seeds that are sown in all our lives, whether they are agricultural, physical, spiritual, or charitable. With this weekend's liturgy, we are focusing on the birth and growth of the Kingdom of God in human lives from a humble and simple perspective.

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ly all throughout East Tennessee) is the basis for Ezekiel's prophecy, wherein he illustrates how the Lord God of Israel will allow a descendant of King David to become the Messiah and savior of the world. In contrast with the parable of the tiny mustard seed from today's Gospel, Ezekiel sees the Messiah originating from David's line. People understood the *things* of life, so what is extraordinary for God is hidden in the ordinary and common things of daily life. In the Second Reading, St. Paul advises the Corinthian Christians how to please God by doing His will (thus advancing the growth of God's kingdom and His rule in their lives), so that they may be amply rewarded in the final judgment. So, what is best?

In our Gospel, Mark shares a parable particularly dear to Jesus as he aligns the growth of the Kingdom of God to the germination of a grain seed and that of a tiny mustard seed. Both have very small beginnings. The grain, by gradual but steady growth, does not depend upon whether the farmer is asleep or awake. In the same way, the embryo in a tiny mustard seed enables it to grow into a large bush. The reign of God in human hearts and the growth of the Church in the world also have small beginnings. Think of who you are today and the humble beginning you may have come from, growing within your family. In a sense the beginning of a Christian requires patience.

As Christians, therefore, let us cooperate with God in growing His kingdom on Earth. For the Kingdom of God is the growth of God's rule in human hearts that occurs when man does the will of God and surrenders his life to God through the everyday little things of our lives. This is what the saints did. In a sense, the seed of faith lies dormant within each of us. When we permit the Holy Spirit to nurture it with tender loving care, it grows mysteriously into ever increasing proportions. Growth most times is quiet, slow, and microscopic. Through the word of God, the Sacred Mass, Sacraments and the Oral Tradition, the seed grows. We need not be discouraged and hopeless, for the work is not ours but that of the Holy Spirit! All we need is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, sowing tiny seeds in the form of love, acts of encouragement, deeds of charity, mercy, and forgiveness.

Joyous Sunday!