

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jul 27th 2015

As young kids in our Sunday School class, our teacher allowed our imaginations to run wild as we discussed what heaven would be like – walking on soft clouds, angels in dainty wings flying around, Jesus and the saints smiling at us, marvelous music, gorgeous gardens, and the important thing: ice-cream; we could eat as much chocolate-chip ice-cream as we wanted! Oh, didn't we all want to go to heaven!

In today's gospel passage from Matthew, Jesus invites his friends and followers to contemplate the Kingdom of Heaven by telling them two stories—one about a man and the other about a woman. The parable of the mustard seed brings to mind the sudden awesome movement from something tiny, almost invisible aspect of God's Kingdom, to an inclusive, all-embracing, and universal entity that welcomes all people. The second parable, about a woman who took leaven and mixed it into the dough, was also a familiar experience that the Israelites of Jesus' time could relate to. They had seen the dough rise after a tiny amount of leaven had been mixed with it. Jesus invited them to see the effect a tiny movement could have on society at large.

In his recent encyclical on the care for our home, Pope Francis invites all of us to be that mustard seed or that little pinch of yeast, to be alive to the presence of God in our own lives, and to be sensitive to the needs of those around us. We are called to focus on our common home, common good, and common responsibility as we strive in little, practical ways to bring a tiny piece of heaven wherever we go. This is a marvelous opportunity to open our minds and hearts to experience the saving love of Jesus here and now and give us a taste of the eternal life that awaits each one of us.

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