

I want all of you to do something with me for today’s homily. Take out your wallet and retrieve a paper bill of any denomination. Now don’t worry, I’m not going to ask you to give it to the parish when I finish, although the parish won’t turn it down! Turn the bill over to the reverse side. Notice the phrase printed on it: *IN GOD WE TRUST*. Is this in fact a truth by which each of us lives? Or do we trust in ourselves (which the money symbolizes) to provide the life and security we all desire?

I often hear people tell me inside and outside the confessional, “Father, I need to trust in God more than I do.” Today’s Scriptures speak to the virtue of faith, *IN GOD WE TRUST*. So how can we grow in such trust?

First of all, Jesus tells us that when it comes to divine life, love and grace God is a prodigal farmer. God will not be outdone in lavishness. No farmer in biblical times, (let alone today!), would consider recklessly tossing seed to the wind to have it fall on good soil, rocky soil, among briars, on pavement –every kind of soil and place possible. Yet, Jesus tells us, this is the way God freely graces everyone.

Secondly, God waits, patiently. The first parable tells us that the farmer “sleeps and rises night and day and through it all the seed sprouts and grows he knows not how.” God is willing to trust, have faith, in the slow, subtle process of growth and development. Think about it—God puts faith in us!! We, on the other hand, expect if not instantaneous, then rapid emergence result and gain for our efforts. Think of the commercials for products that state that in a week, or month we will see significant results with little or no effort on our part. However, growth in faith, in trust in God, like the aging of a fine wine, takes time, effort, and patience in the process. Over the last few months I’ve invited us all to accept the 1% Challenge of Evangelical Catholic—dedicating 15 minutes a day to reading, reflection and prayer with the Scriptures, to allow Jesus to grow a more, or deeper, personal relationship with us. The movements of the Holy Spirit in us are so modest as to be nearly disregarded. Yet if we are patient, are willing to risk faith, trust in God, the Holy Spirit

gradually will surge within us and cause the divine seed to “yield the blade, then the ear, then the full grain” within us.

Third. Such trust does not require superhuman effort to have God work his miracle of life in us. The second parable speaks about a mustard seed, which Jesus states is the smallest of all seeds on earth. In fact, it is not. Smaller still are the petunia, the begonia and orchid seed. But the tiny mustard seed (the size of a pinhead) unassumingly grows to be a great shrub or even a tree, one that is taller than a man’s head! The white mustard seed common in Israel at the time of Jesus grew to ten or twelve feet with a stem the size of a man’s arm! Holiness, as Pope Francis in his latest exhortation, *“Joy and Exaltation”* reminds us is not just for bishops, priests, or vowed members of religious communities, it is a call and gift given to each member of the church.

It is difficult at times for us as Christians to maintain our hope in the coming of God’s Kingdom, of living *IN GOD WE TRUST*. Hearing of world events the power of evil seems overwhelming. The enticements of the world to have it all and have it now by putting trust in realities other than God for our security present themselves as formidable foes. The weapons of prayer and works of mercy seem so small and insignificant.

St. Paul assures us, however, that “we continue to be confident.” What is the source of such confidence? It comes from believing with all our heart in a God “who is our hope and our strength, who brings low the high tree and lifts high the low tree,” to know that the Kingdom is not like the world, which prides itself on “bigness” in many ways. In the Kingdom one does not have to be a “big shot” to make a difference; the smallest person is great and powerful because the seed of God has found rich soil and is yielding a harvest of thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold.

IN GOD WE TRUST.

Fr Jim Secora