

Have you ever wondered:

If you were alive when Christ walked the earth

Would you have been one of his followers?

It wasn't an automatic thing

So many of his followers stayed with him when things were easy

Heard his teaching and saw his miracles

But abandoned him when he taught difficult things

As we enter into Ordinary Time

This is a time of growing in faith and devotion

The big liturgical feasts are finished for the year

And we have time to reflect on our faith

What is it based on?

Are there teachings I struggle with?

What do I do with these teachings?

I can let them sit on the back burner

As long as I am not challenged specifically, let them be

Perhaps I can say that is what the Church teaches

So I will follow it

A blind faith

Or I can try to dig into them

Deeper and deeper

To try to see why the Church teaches this or that

Doing this, Ordinary Time becomes an opportunity to walk with Christ

To open our hearts to his

And allow his love to touch us

So we can return that love to Him

There is something important in our readings today

Many grand events have almost insignificant beginnings

We often want to be involved with the flashy

Like jumping on the bandwagon of a successful sports team

But in life

Especially in the spiritual life

Small beginnings allow for deep roots

To be able to see these

We follow St Paul's teaching

We Christians walk by faith

Not by sight

This gives us a new worldview

Not one limited by our senses

There is more to life than what we see, feel, taste, and measure

Our physical senses only take us so far

Politically, culturally, economically we see the same world

But then our faith adds another dimension

Not opposed to the use of reason, but beyond it

This is what Ezekiel saw

He lived at a very low point in the Israelite community

They had turned away from God

Ezekiel was a prophet

Calling them back to God

Much of his writings were difficult for the people to hear

They thought they would be protected

After all, they were God's Chosen People

But in the end they were conquered

Not only once, but many times

Then they were taken into exile

Now the promises of God seemed to be impossible dreams

Ezekiel too was taken into exile

And the writing we have today is one of hope

Despite everything they are experiencing

God makes a promise through Ezekiel

He will take a tender shoot from the crest of a cedar

He will replant it on the mountain heights of Israel

Birds of every kind will be drawn to it

Things are not as they seem

Ezekiel is calling on them to see by faith, not sight alone

The cedar is the kingdom of David

It has been decimated, but not destroyed

The tender shoot from this tree

This is Jesus, the Son of David

Through Christ, he will restore David's kingdom

The birds of the air

These are the nations of the world

These will be drawn to the Kingdom of God

This forms the basis of Christ's parable on the Kingdom of God

His parables were based on familiar, everyday things in life

They could be understood in many ways

For some people, there may not be any understanding

For others confusion or impatience

But to his disciples, he explained everything in private

Today he speaks of seeds

Spreading them on a field

Not knowing if they will germinate

But trusting they will

And what does the farmer do?

He rises in the morning and sleeps at night

And when it matures

He takes the sickle and harvests it

Of its own accord, the land bears fruit

The farmer is not a passive bystander

He tills and plants and harvests

But he walks by faith that the land will respond

Then Christ looks at the mustard seed

Not literally the smallest of seeds

But a very small seed

And it doesn't literally grow into the largest of plants

But it does become a very large plant

A plant that draws the birds of the sky

To come and dwell in its shade

As in our reading from Ezekiel

The birds of the sky

The nations of the world will be drawn to God's kingdom

When doing God's work

In our families

In our schools

At our workplaces

We begin small

And we walk by faith

Sometimes we look at the world and ask

What is God doing?

Why doesn't he act more concretely?

But this is human reasoning

Look at a seed

With all our scientific advances

We know a lot about seeds

An acorn contains everything within it that will become a giant Oak

**A single grain of corn contains everything that will become a
corn plant**

With one or two ears

Each containing 100 or more seeds

We can manipulate the genes in a seed

Make them resistant to this or that disease

But with all this and more

What do we really know about a seed?

We cannot send scientists into a room and tell them to build a seed

I may have told this before

But it is like a scientist calling out to God

I have discovered the secret to life

God puts him into a laboratory

Ok, create life

And the scientist says first I have to outside and get some dirt

And God says

No, you have this room with all your scientific advances

Make your own dirt

We walk by faith

We see God has his hands on the reins

He is always active in governing the world

He wants us to recognize this

To work with him

And to begin small

Like he does

With Abraham and Sarah

Each over 100 years old

And he gives them a son

Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers

And he rescues the entire Israelite nation from famine

Moses

A Hebrew male who was to be killed when he was born

And he leads the Israelite nation to the Promised Land

Jesus Christ

12 uneducated followers as Apostles

Humanly, an utter failure

Hung on a cross as a political enemy of the state

But the seed is planted

It takes root in the resurrection and Pentecost

And the tree is in all corners of the world

Again and again, when something is needed

A seed is planted

Francis of Assisi

Ignatius of Loyola

Charles Lwanga

Mother Theresa

The list goes on and on

Hopeless situations and failures by sight

Mustard seeds and giant trees by faith

God has His role

And He is faithful

Each of us have our own roles

And when we are faithful

No matter how little we are able to offer

It makes a difference in God's hands

And His Church

His Kingdom will continue to grow and flourish

When we walk by faith