

Dear Brothers and Sisters



The Kingdom of Heaven is like...a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds....

A few years ago, I celebrated a Baccalaureate Mass in a Parochial school. The graduating 8th graders were there of course, but so too was the rest of the school. I had prepared a homily on the Gospel of the day, but on arriving found that we were using the Gospel of the mustard seed, the Gospel which will be read at Mass this Sunday.

I asked the children if any of them had planted seeds. Many hands went up. I asked if the seeds had grown and if so, what they did to make them grow. The answers:

You have to love the seed. You have to be patient. It needs to be cared for.

Not what I was expecting, but out of the mouth of babes.... How true. We are this seed, the smallest of all that has been planted by God. He has loved us, cared for us and been infinitely patient with us.

In this way the seed, each of us, has been able to grow.

The mustard seed is an image of the Kingdom of Heaven. I asked the children if anyone had been to heaven. One hand went up. But when asked what heaven was like many raised their hand. Here are the answers:

Heaven is a place where there is no fighting, where people care for each other.

Heaven is a place where people share their stuff.

Heaven is a place where you can make a mistake and you don't get in trouble.

Heaven is a place where God sits on a big red chair and the angels fly all around him.

I'm not sure about the last answer, but the others seemed pretty convincing.

The great thing is that this experience of heaven – love, caring, forgiveness, sharing, understanding, begins here on earth. The children spoke from their own experiences, they had in some way witnessed heaven.

God planted a small seed when he created each of us and put us on earth. We can grow in the measure we experience his love, his compassion, his care, his forgiveness. So much so that the smallest of seeds grows into the largest of plants, where many can find refuge in its branches. The work that God is doing in each of us is Good News for others who are able to find solace and comfort in us.

May all of us experience heaven on earth today.

Fr. Sean