

**Readings Ezekiel 17: 22-24; Corinthians 5: 6-10; Mark 4: 26-34**



**Fr Michael says:**

### **Small Beginnings**

As we look at our place in Society as Church, we seem to be very much on the “fringe”. In many ways, there have been many trials and difficulties in recent times as we are aware; the decline in the number of priestly and religious vocations, causing so many pastoral issues up and down the country and the increasing vibrancy of the anti-Church and anti-Faith groups.

So today’s message to us can offer comfort, support and direction. The Gospel presents us with a series of Parables on growth and relating them to what Jesus is doing in His Ministry. Ezekiel in his story presents us with a similar scenario, the twig becoming a massive cedar tree, with the vision of a new Exodus and re-establishment of the Chosen People in Jerusalem, through the work of a new Prophet who would be Jesus for us. Paul exhorts us to do our part, no matter how small.

Today we are encouraged to sow the seed, to encourage seeds already planted and bring to fruitfulness and harvest yet others. We need to pray Blessed Oscar Romero’s prayer constantly, especially as we live in a society, which expects instant responses! “It helps now and then, to step back and take the long view – the Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision! ...No sets of goals and objectives include everything! ... We lay foundations that will need further development, yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.... We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way – an opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest!” His reflections are the result of the experiences we had undergone of persecution, but stressing his wonderful sense of commitment and dedication to the People he was leading – a dedication which led to his Martyrdom in 1980.

Some things cannot be rushed, like faith, like crops, growing to maturity, relationships or parenthood. We can so easily go for the easy option, the quick solution, without thinking, neglecting many of the more personal and meaningful actions which do take time! Like farmers, we need the virtues of patience, trust and hope. In the great processes of growth, healing, recovery and spiritual progress, we can only act as facilitators to the work of the Spirit within. We do what we can and hand the rest over to God!

The prayer of an Indian mystic might be of help to us: “On many an idle day have I grieved over lost time, but it is never lost, my Lord! You have taken every moment of my life in your hands, hidden in the heart of things – you are nourishing seeds into sprouts; buds into blossoms and ripening flowers into fruitfulness. I was tired and sleeping on my idle bed and imagining all work had ceased. In the morning I woke up and found my garden full with wonders of flowers.”