



## The Fruit of the Kingdom

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Friday of the Third Week in Ordinary Time

Author: Father Walter Schu, LC

*Mark 4:26-34*

He said, "This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come." He said, "To what shall we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use for it? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it. Without parables he did not speak to them, but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.

**Introductory Prayer:** Lord, I come into your presence with openness of heart. I know that you want to plant your seed in me and help it to bear fruit. I trust that you will pour out your mercy on me as I spend this time with you. I want to love you more and become a better instrument of your love.

**Petition:** Lord, help me contemplate the action of your grace upon the world and fully cooperate with you.

**1. Steady Growth:** Jesus reminds me that his grace is working in the world. His message carries an interior dynamism that affects

souls and brings about change in them. I think of someone who has surprised me by sudden conversion or steady growth in Christian living. I see many people who are working on projects of evangelization or are full of Christian charity. I many other people who are trying in their secular occupations to do their part to make this world better. I contemplate the many families that are striving to be places of love which each person is valued as a unique gift. This is the seed of the Gospel that grows silently without our knowing how.

**2. When the Grain Is Ripe:** God, in his mercy, often adds years to our life so that we can learn wisdom and produce in our actions fruit that is worthy of eternity. How much do I value ~~those~~ opportunities I have each day to do simple acts of charity or leave messages that have a beneficial effect on others? How often do I pray for others? Each day, I should be attentive to the small and big opportunities the Lord gives me to help establish his kingdom more deeply in my soul and in the souls of others.

**3. Disproportionate Strength:** Like the image of the mustard tree in the parable, Christ's grace sustains many men and women throughout the world. People discover in Christ's friendship the true home their hearts seek and he communion with all men they intuitively desire. What a great gift we have in the Church! Let us try to make it a true home for all people. Let us partake deeply of its teachings and its grace and become more deeply a gift for others. The strength of love sustains us.

**Conversation with Christ:** Lord, thank you for the workings of your grace in so many souls. I want to be united with your grace throughout this day and throughout my life. Help me to use this day in such a way that I will be planting your love around me.

**Resolution:** Today I will take time to say a special prayer or make a special sacrifice for the conversion of sinners.