



Jesus said to the crowds, "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 believe you have called me to strive tirelessly to extend your Kingdom throughout the world. I hope in you because you are the one the Father sent. I love you. Thank you for inviting me to be an apostle of your Kingdom.

Petition: Lord Jesus, make me an apostle of your Kingdom.

1. Kingdom of God: Christ returns to this theme again and again. It was the topic of his first public sermon. He gives us the image of the mustard seed which grows to be the largest of plants and in turn serves other creatures' needs. The Kingdom of God is like this. God is king and his Kingdom, like the mustard tree, is a safe haven for us. We can

dwell in its shade, rest on its branches, and find protection from evils. All we have to do is be faithful subjects of our King, following his commands and going out to spread the news of his Kingdom to all people.

2. Modest Beginnings: We should not get anxious when we do not progress in the spiritual life as fast as we would like. God moves us along little by little. The life of our relationship with Christ does not depend solely on us, but on him. We are like good farmers who do our part to make sure the conditions are good for the seed to grow, but it is the Creator who makes the growth happen. Often, we do not perceive the work of God in our souls until much time has passed. However, he is constantly there, pulling out our weeds one at a time, and pushing our virtues to the surface.

3. Called to Greatness: Two thousand years ago, Christ's Church started off like a small mustard seed. It has grown and matured to be a huge plant with many branches. I am one of those branches. Christ brings life to my branch and assigns me a specific task. He calls me to participate in the great mission of his Church. Do I realize and relish how great it is to be a Catholic, how much good the Church does, how I am called to be a link that will bring others to experience the same goodness I have experienced?

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, I am a member of your Mystical Body. I want to partake in your mission of bringing all souls to know and love you. I have found my joy in you, and now I have a burning desire to make it known to all people. Lord, I pray for the courage to keep going, never tiring from the mission you have given me.

Resolution: I will take a moment in prayer to reflect on how God has worked in my life, making me grow.