

# The Living Word

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

17 June 2012

## First Reading Ez 17:22-24

*A reading from the prophet Ezekiel*

I have made the small tree great.

The Lord says this:

'From the top of the cedar,  
from the highest branch I will take a  
shoot  
and plant it myself on a very high  
mountain.

I will plant it on the high mountain of  
Israel.

It will sprout branches and bear fruit,  
and become a noble cedar.

Every kind of bird will live beneath it,  
every winged creature rest in the  
shade of its branches.

And every tree of the field will learn  
that I, the Lord, am the one

who stunts tall trees and makes the  
low ones grow,

who withers green trees and makes  
the withered green.

I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will do  
it.'

*The word of the Lord.*

## Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 91:2-3. 13-16. R. see v.2**

*(R.) Lord it is good to give thanks to you.*

1. It is good to give thanks to the Lord  
to make music to your name, O Most  
High,  
to proclaim your love in the morning  
and your truth in the watches of the  
night. (R.)
2. The just will flourish like the palm-  
tree  
and grow like a Lebanon cedar. (R.)
3. Planted in the house of the Lord  
they will flourish in the courts of our  
God,  
still bearing fruit when they are old,  
still full of sap, still green,  
to proclaim that the Lord is just.  
In him, my rock, there is no wrong.  
(R.)

## Second Reading 2 Cor 5:6-10

*A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians*

Whether we are living in the body or exiled from it,  
we are intent on pleasing the Lord..

We are always full of confidence when  
we remember that to live in the body  
means to be exiled from the Lord, going  
as we do by faith and not by sight - we

are full of confidence, I say, and actually  
want to be exiled from the body and make  
our home with the Lord. Whether we are  
living in the body or exiled from it, we are  
intent on pleasing him. For all the truth  
about us will be brought out in the law  
court of Christ, and each of us will get  
what he deserves for the things he did in  
the body, good or bad.

*The word of the Lord.*

## Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

*The seed is the word of God, Christ is the  
sower;*

*all who come to him will live for ever.*

*Alleluia!*

## Gospel Mk 4:26-34

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark*

The mustard seed, the smallest of all the seeds,  
grows into the biggest shrub of all.

Jesus said to the crowds, 'This is what  
the kingdom of God is like. A man throws  
seed on the land. Night and day, while  
he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is  
sprouting and growing; how, he does not  
know. Of its own accord the land produces  
first the shoot, then the ear, then the full  
grain in the ear. And when the crop is  
ready, he loses no time; he starts to reap  
because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'What can we say the  
kingdom of God is like? What parable  
can we find for it? It is like a mustard  
seed which at the time of its sowing in  
the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on  
earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the  
biggest shrub of them all and puts out big  
branches so that the birds of the air can  
shelter in its shade.'

Using many parables like these, he spoke  
the word to them, so far as they were  
capable of understanding it. He would not  
speak to them except in parables, but he  
explained everything to his disciples when  
they were alone.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*



## Reflection

*by Greg Sunter*

This week's gospel is a wonderful example of  
the teaching style of Jesus. It even tells us that  
'he would not speak to them except in parables'.  
Jesus used the parable form almost exclusively  
to share his message. He used imagery that  
was familiar to his audience; parables about  
the everyday life of a rural community: seeds,  
planting, growing, harvesting. The secret of  
Jesus' parables, when we understand the  
cultural context, is that there was always a 'twist  
in the tale' - what is called a 'discombobulating  
shift' - that turns the expected outcome of the  
story on its head.

This is nowhere more evident than in the image  
of the mustard seed. On the surface the parable  
is about the kingdom of God starting from very  
small, humble beginnings and growing into  
something great. However, immediately prior  
to this kingdom parable, Jesus has reminded  
us that the community makes a living out of  
growing grain crops like wheat for bread, etc.  
His parable about the mustard seed describes  
a tiny seed that grows into a great shrub 'so that  
the birds of the air can shelter in its shade'. A  
farming community that was growing grain  
crops would be greatly alarmed at the thought  
of actually attracting birds to their fields or even  
nearby. Jesus' message about the kingdom of  
God is that it is actually disruptive and invasive.  
The kingdom brings unrest and disquiet to the  
predictable. The kingdom of God is unsettling.  
This is a much more challenging parable than it  
appears from a literal reading.

The psalm responses are from the English Translation of the  
Lectionary for the Mass ©1981 International Committee on  
English in the Liturgy Inc.(ICEL). All rights reserved. The psalm texts,  
from *The Psalms, A New Translation*, ©1963 by The Grail, England  
and used by permission of the publishers. The scriptural quotations  
are taken from the Jerusalem Bible, published and copyright 1966,  
1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday  
& Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers.

© 2012 Creative Ministry Resources Pty Ltd  
All use must be in accordance with your user licensing agreement.

