**11 B 2018**

We hear today 2 famous parables of the Kingdom of God. The first alludes to the 2 great questions of wonder, namely “how?” and “why?”. How the seed grows is the wonder of nature and of science. Why the seed grows is the wonder of God. The 2 questions or wonders should not be confused.

Why the seed grows is because God wants it to. It is by his power and his authority. He involves the man in the sowing and in the harvesting but the man does not know how or why it grows. Science will teach him in years to come more about how it grows – cell division and so on but it will never tell him why it grows. That will always remain in the realm of God. What is crucial is that God uses the man to assist in the growth of the seed and he uses us to establish his Kingdom on earth. ”Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth”, we pray every day. But as we pray it, we know he will use us to implement it. He recruits us as his earthly stewards.

We need to adopt an attitude of humility. The man in the parable sows and harvests but the important bit about the seed growing is not down to him. God invites or calls us ALL into ministry to each other in family and community and to serve others beyond. I for instance take my role in this parish community very seriously. I do what I do and say what I say with as much reflection and prayerfulness as I can. .. But I know that I am only really offering a facility or an accommodation to God. I don’t grow the seed. I only plant seeds that will one day grow or I water seeds that have already been planted, knowing that they hold future promise. It is God who produces the life, the sign of which is of course growth.

None of us can do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realising that – in ministry, in parenthood, in any relationship! This enables to do something at least, and to do it as well as we can. We accommodate God’s grace, his life. That is what it means to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. Our attitude or beatitude of humility allows a realistic perception of what is going on.

We offer what we can with love and with trust. We offer it humility having accepted our own gifts with gratitude and with humility. We then must stand back – as ministers or even as parents! God’s work will go on and we cannot determine the outcome. Only proud people think they can. No God’s work continues, “night and day, while we sleep, while we are awake, how we do not know”.

We throw the pebble in the pond. God is responsible for the ripples. Sometimes I have been arrogant and I have thought I have made a massive contribution to something and do you know what? There are no ripples and no real effect. Other times I have known that I have offered something of myself that is minimal and yet the effect is enormous – beyond what I ever meant or imagined. Why? Because it was not me. It was God who made the garden grow.

And that is what he meant by his second parable. The mustard seed as the smallest somehoe produced the greatest – not of itself but by God’s grace!

We trust our very best efforts and our very least efforts to God. What growth there is in his kingdom will be by his grace. It is his his problem. Not yours, not mine. Thank God.