

**For The Bulletin Of
June 14, 2015**

**THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN
SUMMER'S ORDINARY TIME**

From Father Robert

No modern farmer would do what the first parable of today's gospel relates. Seeds are not "scattered...on the land" but carefully placed in precise rows. The farmer does not "sleep and rise night and day" without any regard for what has been planted. Instead, the farmer knows that of "its own accord the land" may not yield what the farmer needs to recover costs and make a living. So the farmer fertilizes, irrigates, spreads weed killer and pesticides, checks weather reports, and prays a lot! Farming has become big business and an exacting science. But, ultimately, the farmer knows that neither nature alone nor human effort can guarantee a desired agricultural outcome. In Jesus' time husbandry was still the largest of human occupations. It is no wonder Jesus draws so many parables from what would have been very familiar to His listeners. In the end, however, seeds planted, growing, and yielding a harvest remains a mystery to which we must yield. We know that a fruitful harvest is, ultimately, a gift.

In today's gospel both the land the mustard seed actualize their potential – they do what by nature they are created to do. At least in the ideal circumstances of parables. A parable is meant to take us beyond the literal. These two are used by Jesus to help us grasp what is surely a mystery: the "kingdom of God." This kingdom is not a place or space. It is not something we can

discover or conquer. Instead, these parables invite us to be who we are and allow God's kingdom to conquer us. These parables call us to surrender to God's Word and action within us, to cooperate with God in bringing about a world filled with abundance and promise. These parables challenge us to make the kingdom of God a visible reality shaping our daily living.

The "kingdom of God" is visible when we, like the land and mustard seed, actualize our potential and do what we are called to do as Jesus' disciples'. What are we to do? Hear God's Word, nurture it in the fertile soil of our hearts, and let it sprout good works. In other words, God's kingdom is visible in us when we surrender ourselves to God's ways, when we hear God's will for us, when we live in a way consistent with who God created us to be and how God intends us to do. In this way we become living parables doing what God created us to do and being who God created us to be. In the end, we ourselves are God's abundant harvest. And perhaps this is the greatest mystery of all.

Living The Paschal Mystery

If we are to be God's abundant harvest, then our first task for living the Gospel and paschal mystery is to hear God's Word. In that divine Word we receive God's direction for our lives, hear God's will, and determine how we are to live God's mystery of salvation. The word is like the mustard seed that is planted in us. We nurture it with caring acts, help it to grow by watering it with the tears of our self-giving, weed it by rooting out all in us that is opposed to God's desires for us. Each good or not so good choice we make each day affects the growth of the

mustard seed-word that God plants deep within us.

It is never enough to merely hear God's word. We must always let that word inform the actions we undertake. Understanding God's word is a matter of standing up for Gospel values, standing under those who need support and encouragement, standing for Jesus and His invitation to live as he did.

Even though we have been in Summer's Ordinary Time for the past three weeks, this is the "first" time we are actually celebrating a Sunday in Summer's Ordinary Time as we mark the Eleventh Sunday. The "long, green season" has begun and we will continue to reflect on Jesus' teachings and how they impact our lives. How have today's scriptures touched your heart?

- The potential I see in myself is...The potential God sees in me is...
- I nurture God's word in my heart by...the fruit this bears for others is...
- I make the kingdom of God visible when I...

About Liturgy – Human Labor

Each year on the first Monday of September (coming up in about six weeks) we celebrate the civil holiday Labor Day. More than an excuse for a day off from work, it is fitting that at least once a year we pause as a nation to pray for the safety of all laborers, pray that all receive just wages and benefits, pray in gratitude for the work of others who make our own lives more wholesome and comfortable. It is also a good day to remember that work is not drudgery; it is an opportunity to

cooperate with God in bringing about God's kingdom.

We can look at work in a negative way, as a "necessary evil." After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, God expelled them from Paradise and said they would now toil and sweat to produce food that was once freely given to them. But it is more helpful to look at work in a positive way: God worked to create and redeem us, and by this showed us that work has an inherent dignity. Through our choice to contribute to a ministry in the parish we help build up the Body of Christ as we share our gifts with our sisters and brothers in Christ. Our reaching out to do good for others is work that makes God present in new and ever creating ways. The work of cooperating in Jesus' saving ministry raises up our labors to bring an imitation of the divine action making present God's reign of peace and justice, abundance and life, mercy and forgiveness.

The Funeral For Donna Schmidt

Tomorrow morning at 10:30 a.m., we will celebrate a Memorial Funeral Liturgy for our Charter Member, Donna Schmidt, wife of Paul and mother of Greg. The Funeral Liturgy will be followed by a Reception under the direction of our new St. Martha's Guild in the parish hall. Please keep Donna, Paul, and Greg in your thoughts and prayers as we lay her to rest.

Our Concert Series Resumes

This coming Friday evening, June 19th, the first concert of the Summer Series will take place. Our very own, **Don Pearson**, will perform works which you have selected from the flyer that was distributed at last week's liturgies. Both

Sacred and contemporary works will be featured. Following the concert, a reception will be held in our parish hall and a free-will offering will be received to help defray the costs of the reception. All are welcome, invited, and encouraged to attend. I hope to see you there.

Golden Anniversary Congratulations

At the conclusion of the Vigil Eucharist this coming Saturday evening, June 20th, our parishioners, **Carl and Pat Bartholomeu**, will be honored with a blessing as they celebrate 50 years of marriage. Congratulations and best wishes to you! Thank you for being such a wonderful sign of God's goodness, faithfulness, and love. May you be blessed with many more years of happiness, the best of health, and the deepening of your love.

Flag Day in United States

People across the United States celebrate Flag Day on June 14 each year to honor the United States flag and to commemorate the flag's adoption. On the same day, the United States Army celebrates its birthday.



Flag Day honors the United States flag.

What do people do?

Flag Day falls within National Flag Week, a time when Americans reflect on the foundations of the nation's freedom. The flag of the United States represents freedom and has been an enduring symbol of the country's ideals since its early days. During both events, Americans also remember their loyalty to the nation, reaffirm their belief in liberty and justice, and observe the nation's unity.

Many people in the United States honor this day by displaying the American flag at homes and public buildings. Other popular ways of observing this holiday include: flag-raising ceremonies; Flag Day services; school quizzes and essay competitions about the American flag; musical salutes; street parades; and awards for special recognition.

Organizations such as The National Flag Day Foundation are actively involved in coordinating activities centered on the event and keeping the flag's traditions alive. Following Flag Day is Honor

America Days, a 21-day period through to Independence Day (July 4) to honor America. During this period, people hold public gatherings and activities to celebrate and honor the nation.

Public life

Although Flag Day is a nationwide observance, it is not a public holiday in many parts of the United States. It is a legal holiday in a few areas in the USA, such as Montour County in Pennsylvania.

Background

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress replaced the British symbols of the Grand Union flag with a new design featuring 13 white stars in a circle on a field of blue and 13 red and white stripes – one for each state. Although it is not certain, this flag may have been made by the Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross, who was an official flag maker for the Pennsylvania Navy. The number of stars increased as the new states entered the Union, but the number of stripes stopped at 15 and was later returned to 13.

In June 1886 Bernard Cigrand made his first public proposal for the annual observance of the birth of the flag when he wrote an article titled “The Fourteenth of June” in the old Chicago Argus newspaper. Cigrand’s effort to ensure national observance of Flag Day finally came when President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation calling for a nationwide observance of the event on June 14, 1916. However, Flag Day did not become official until August 1949, when President Harry Truman signed the legislation and proclaimed June 14 as Flag Day. In 1966, Congress also requested that the President issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as National Flag Week.

The President is requested to issue each year a proclamation to: call on government officials in the USA to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on Flag Day; and to

urge US residents to observe Flag Day as the anniversary of the adoption on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.

Symbols

The American flag, also nicknamed as “Old Glory” or “star-spangled banner”, has changed designs over the centuries. It consists of 13 equal horizontal stripes of red (top and bottom) alternating with white, with a blue rectangle in the canton bearing 50 small, white, five-pointed stars. Each of the 50 stars represents one of the 50 states in the United States and the 13 stripes represent the original 13 colonies that became the first states in the Union.

Thank You

...to our faithful parishioners who arrived early last Saturday morning to clean the church, kitchen, and parish hall: **Mency Osborne, Nancy Santos, Jun Bajet, Reno Benasfre** and to those who cleaned the bathrooms in the church and parish hall: **Steve Rojek, Gino Ramos, Geri Abaya, Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Harlan Young.**

Gifts and Memorials

There are opportunities for individuals and families to honor or memorialize a loved one by designating something for the church, such as the Icons or the new Presidential and Diaconal Chairs, Vestments, or flower arrangements at the Altar and Ambo. If you are interested in providing something in honor of or in loving memory of a family member or friend, please speak with me and I will assist you in making your gift possible.