



## Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 17th June 2018

In England & Wales

Cycle of Prayer – Respect for Human Life

Keynote: Called to grow in the Kingdom of God, and bring forth a rich, plentiful harvest

### Prophet Ezekiel 17: 22-24

*‘The Lord says: “From the top of the cedar, from the highest branch I will take a shoot and plant it myself on a very high mountain... it will sprout branches and bear fruit and become a noble cedar.”*’ The imagery used is of the striking of the new twig representing a future king chosen from the royal house of David. Speaking in God’s name the prophet reminds the people that God’s covenant with the People of Israel is to be fulfilled. Recalling for them the flood story and the safety of Noah’s ark where every kind of bird and creature found refuge, for under this great noble cedar *‘Every kind of bird will live beneath it, every winged creature rest in the shade of its branches... I, the Lord, have spoken, and will do it.’*

**Responsorial Psalm 91 (90): 2-3, 13-16** – A joyful song of a happy man, in thanksgiving

### Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 5: 6-10

*‘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.’* Scholars believe that the apostle Paul is referring to his own present sufferings and the persecution he undergoes from the civil or religious authorities, which he endures in the service of the Gospel. Paul is reminding the church in Corinth that such trials are not really significant for the true home and destiny of the Christian is to be found elsewhere. For in the court of heaven, says Paul, *‘each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did in the body, good or bad.’*

### Gospel according to Mark 4: 26-34

Like other ‘seed’ parables in the New Testament, here the contrast is between the smallness of the seed and the greatness of the final harvest. Jesus speaking to the crowds says, *‘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... of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then ear, then the full grain in the ear... and when it is ready: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.’* The second parable also speaks of the kingdom. The smallest mustard seed growing into a great shrub that *‘puts out branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.’* Like the great cedar tree in the first reading today, all may find shelter in the kingdom of God. Jesus would only speak in parables to them but explained his meaning to his disciples when they were alone. The kingdom of God, like the tiny mustard seed, may have small beginnings, but the outcome at harvest time will be plentiful.

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