**Homily** **for the** **11th Sunday in Ordinary Time***Rev. Francis D. Kim*

        When I was a seminarian in South Korea, my spiritual director was an American. He was a missionary priest from Green Bay, Wisconsin. He went to South Korea in his early twenties after the Korean War in 1953, and he is now in his eighties. He has served the Korean Church for more than sixty years. He is still living in South Korea, and he wants to die there.

        I remember he always watched football games late evening or early morning in the rectory, so now I also like the Green Bay Packers. Some day, I will visit his family in Green Bay, and talk about his beautiful life in South Korea as a missionary. He persisted in his wonderful mission as a disciple of Jesus.

        Right after the Korean War, Korea was all destroyed, and many foreign missionaries went to South Korea to help the Korean Church and Korean society. Sixty years later, South Korea has made successful developments in the society and the Catholic Church as well.

        When I reflect on the missionary’s life, it is so inspiring how a small seed became a big tree. In the missionary’s efforts and devotions, the Korean Catholic Church has successfully made inculturation in Korean society, even though Korean culture is very different from Christian culture.

        Now, no foreign missionaries go to South Korea any more; instead, many Korean missionaries go all around the world. In addition, the Catholic faith is increasing and has become the most credible religion among Koreans. It is amazing how a small seed became a big tree in God’s mystery!

        In today’s Gospel, talking two brief parables, Jesus says about the Kingdom of God. These two parables both compare the reign of God to seed.

        In the first one, the seed grows slowly day by day. And, the second one is about mustard seed that is very small, but grows large enough to give shelter and shade. Both of these parables are about big results emerging from small beginnings.

        God’s kingdom works in a similar fashion. It starts from the smallest beginnings in the hearts of men and women who are receptive to God’s word. This kingdom of God is found in the little happenings of daily life, in everyday life with its ups and downs. In the daily struggle where most people spend most of their lives, in fact, there is the Kingdom of God.

        Think about our daily life; We step into the Kingdom of God when we visit friends in the hospital. We reveal the Kingdom of God when we send a greeting card to remind a friend living far away that we love them and are thinking about them. Parents make the Kingdom of God present by driving their children to baseball practice.

        We express the Kingdom of God when we pray that God will shower His blessings on our neighbors. We find the Kingdom of God when we forgive the person who hurt us in some way.

        Notice the pattern: wherever we find love, whenever we give love, there is the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is free to appear anywhere and anytime, and we do not know how it grows.

        The Kingdom of God can pop up in the most unexpected places in the small happenings of daily life. When love and hope is sown, we don’t know how or where it might sprout root and grow. Because we do not know how, we might find the Kingdom of God growing anywhere, anytime.

        A dramatic example shows how the Kingdom of God can pop up in the most unexpected places. It is the story of one mother’s forgiving the man who killed her son.

        The son was just out of college, smart, and good-looking. Shot down in street by a man who killed for the flat-out thrill of killing. The mother could not live with bitterness in her heart. She decided to visit the killer and forgive him. A letter to the prisoner brought no response. She then visited the prison. The convict agreed to meet her. Her visits continued, and the man began to tell about his childhood.

        He was unwanted, and his parents never stopped telling him he was unwanted. He was continually abused, physically and mentally. He became totally antisocial. One day he told the mother, “You cannot imagine the immense joy I felt when I stood over your son and realized I had killed him!” A moment of ultimate power, a sense of self-worth flooded over him in the act of killing.

        The mother’s visits continued. She wrote to him. And at the end of each visit, hugged her son’s killer. After months, she detected tiny tear in the corner of the man’s eye. She had become his mother, and he became another son to her. That is the Kingdom growing, and we don’t understand how it is growing. A tear comes from a heart of stone. We wonder and vibrate with joy at the power of God’s love and marvel at catching a glance of the Kingdom of God.

        In God’s Kingdom, situation we stumble into change us. Against the mother’s deep anger grew the realization she did not want to spend her life hating anyone. So, she forgave the killer. He responded to her love and returned that love. That is God’s Kingdom.

        Whenever we show love and care to friends and family, when we bring love to the neighbors by serving them, we are sowing seeds of the Kingdom. When parents teach their children how to make the sign of the Cross, the great journey of faith begins. There, the mustard seed is growing into the largest of shrubs.

        In His Kingdom, God wants us to love; and when we love, we are in His Kingdom, we bring the Kingdom, we experience the Kingdom.