

Chaplain's Bulletin June 16, 2024



Dear Folks,

Today in Mark 4:26-34 we hear the parable of the seed that grows mysteriously without us knowing how (unique to the Gospel of Mark). This points to a major paradox in Christianity: We are called to effort, but it is God who accomplishes things.

We do not bring about the kingdom of God. We are called to work for a better world but God is the One who makes the kingdom happen.

People like Hitler, Stalin, and Mao thought they could build an ideal society by their own wisdom and skill. They wound up doing horribly evil things because they were sure it served this great vision, but they failed to produce the result. Instead, they left the people in misery. If God brings about the kingdom, we know our part is smaller, so we are not important enough to think we can decide that killing millions of innocent people is within our scope. We know if we obey God, great things will happen, even if we don't live to see them (John 4:37-38).

This also means that in spite of how much of a mess the world is in, and how small our abilities are in comparison, we can face the world boldly.

We can be bolder in our aspirations and at the same time more humble in how we seek them.

Perhaps the two most influential people I can think of in the last thousand years were St. Francis of Assisi and St. Theresa of Calcutta (Mother Theresa). They dedicated themselves to service, sacrifice, caring for the sick and proclaiming the truth. They had no political power. They were willing to do the humblest jobs. They both suffered from great inner darkness but saw much joy and beauty in God's creation. They focused more on their own sins than the sins of others (Matthew 7:4-5). St. Francis saw his order change his rule, and he couldn't stop them. His order has thousands of people all over the world, and his example has inspired and influenced countless people, including non-Catholics, including non-Christians. Does anyone doubt that the same will be said of Mother Theresa a thousand years from now?

We are called to action, but God will make things happen. We can do small things, but if they are done with love, they can, over time, have great effects. Do not get discouraged by anything.

Blessings,
Fr. Jim