

Meditations: Tuesday of the Thirtieth Week of Ordinary Time

Some reflections that can assist our prayer during the thirtieth week of Ordinary Time. The topics are: God works in little things; the disproportion between the mission and the instrument; a leavening word.

- God works in little things
- The disproportion between the mission and the instrument
- A leavening word

JESUS CAME to reveal the intimate life of God and his saving plan to us. But how can we express the greatness of the love He wants to give us in words? That is why, during his public ministry, Jesus felt the need to use images to illuminate his mystery: *What is the Kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?* (Lk 13:18), He asked.

By choosing images from everyday life, Jesus wants to lead us into that mystery through a path that is familiar to us. These examples give us a glimpse of God's action in our souls and in history. The Kingdom of God *is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree; and the birds of the air made nests in its branches. It is also like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened* (Lk 13:19, 21).

The grain of mustard seed and the leaven speak of littleness and discretion. God often works in imperceptible, yet always effective, ways. If we want to recognize his humble and hidden omnipotence, we must pay attention to what does not draw attention. At times, it may not be easy, as our days are filled with activities that require much of our focus, and we may not perceive the Lord's action. Yet "God is at work, like a good little seed that silently and slowly germinates. And, little by little, it becomes a lush tree, which gives life and rest to everyone. The seed of our good works too can seem like a small thing, yet all that is good pertains to God, and thus it humbly, slowly bears fruit. Good, let us remember, always grows in a humble way, in a hidden, often invisible way."^[1] —

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WHEN JESUS speaks of the mustard seed, He is also telling his disciples how his Church will be in the world: “The Lord wanted to prove his greatness. For this is exactly how preaching the kingdom of God will be: the disciples were the weakest, the smallest among men. But there was great strength in them, and the kingdom spread throughout the world.”^[2] — Evangelization and the spread of Christ's kingdom begin with little things. This is true of each Christian. Each of us is like a mustard seed sown in the field of our workplace and family environment. Through small acts of love, we can become a refuge for many birds of the air that will come to nest in our branches.

This reality can fill us with hope and optimism when we feel that spreading the kingdom of God throughout the world is a difficult task. Perhaps “the thought may come

that there are very few of us who have really taken to heart this divine invitation.”^[3] But a little leaven is enough for the whole batch. We can be sure “that Jesus has redeemed us all, and that he wishes to make use of a few of us, despite our personal nothingness, to make his salvation known to all.”^[4] The history of the Church began with a few people who may not have possessed many talents but who had the grace of having seen the risen Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. Others had more abilities or means at their disposal, as St. Paul's letters to the early Christian communities reveal. In any case, the power of lived faith led all of them to go to the ends of the earth and every social class. We too can reach all the people around us.

YEAST ACTS as a hidden and mysterious force. St. Josemaría described it as follows: “In many places (you yourselves may have seen it done) the baking process is like a real ceremonial, ending up with a splendid product that you can almost taste with your eyes. They start with good flour, of top quality if possible. Then the dough is worked in the kneading-trough and the yeast is mixed in. It is a long and patient job. The dough must now be left to rest; this is essential for the leaven to do its work and make the dough rise. Meanwhile, the oven is made ready, its temperature rising as the logs of wood burn bright. The risen dough is placed in the glowing oven and turns into high quality bread, wonderfully light and fresh. This result would never have been possible had it not been for the small amount of leaven, which dissolved and disappeared among the other ingredients,

working effectively and passing unnoticed.”^[5]

In the silence of our prayer, and also in the middle of our daily lives, we can allow the word of God to enter like a pinch of yeast. Little by little, it can act in our hearts and actions, transforming our lives into good, appetizing bread. Perhaps a verse, image, or phrase has resonated in our souls when we read the Scriptures; if so, we can hold on to that word, mixing it into our daily lives so it can ferment and divinize them. “Let us allow God’s voice to immediately enter in the [moment of] calm. He is waiting for us to do this. [...] The Word of God is not simply a text to read. The Word of God is a living presence, it is a work of the Holy Spirit that comforts, instructs, gives light, strength, relief, and a zest for life. To read the Bible, to read a piece, one or two passages of the Bible, is like a short telegram

from God that immediately goes to the heart.”^[6] A woman appears in the parable of the leaven mixed in the dough. We can think of this woman as Mary, working to hide Christ’s leaven in her children’s hearts so our lives grow and mature.

^[1] Pope Francis, Angelus, 13-VI-2021.

^[2] St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, no. 46.

^[3] St. Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 9.

^[4] Ibid.

^[5] Ibid, no. 257.

^[6] Pope Francis, Audience, 21-XII-2022.

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(03/22/2026)