



FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020

(LEC. 321)

FRIDAY OF THIRD WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME (OBL MEM. SAINT JOHN BOSCO, PRIEST)

1. **2 SAMUEL 11:1-4A, 5-10A, 13-17**
2. **MARK 4:26-34**

GOSPEL RELATED: **CCC 546**

FOCUS: THE LIFE OF SAINT JOHN BOSCO MODELS FOR US A WAY TO LIVE OUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

Jesus used parables to teach, and the mustard seed from the parable we hear today in Mark's Gospel is a simple, but powerful visual simile for understanding the kingdom of God. We can all picture a tiny mustard seed and the large shrub into which it grows, with its yellow flowers reaching for the sun. We know that Jesus is at the core of its growth, but where do we fit in? As members of the kingdom of God, could we be one of the tiny branches, or perhaps a petal on one of the flowers?

Today is the memorial of Saint John Bosco, whose life definitely places him firmly among the branches of that mustard plant. He was not born famous. He did not descend from a royal family, or become a world-renowned celebrity. In fact, he was born to a poor family in 1815 in Italy and was raised with his siblings by a single mother. He left home at the age of 12 to seek his destiny. He had a hunger for learning and was blessed to meet a priest who helped him feed this hunger.

John felt called to the priesthood, and was ordained. As he began his ministry, he came in contact with many orphans who lived on the streets or even in the prisons. Instead of seeing them as delinquent, he believed in them.

He did not see troubled youth; he saw young people with potential. The education he treasured in his own life was made available to them. He became a teacher of youth. Through his efforts, hundreds of boys were removed from a life on the streets and provided for. He fostered many calls to the priesthood and worked with his mother to provide for orphan girls as well.

His work did not go unnoticed. Many were drawn to him and joined him in his efforts. Eventually, he founded an order of priests known as the Salesian Society. Together, they opened several schools to educate the poor. Even today, they operate shelters for the homeless or at-risk youth around the world.

So, we go back to the earlier question of, "How are we a part of that mustard plant?" How are we a part of the kingdom of God? If we look to the example of John Bosco, we might better see our own potential. He came from very humble beginnings, and yet truly made a difference in the world. What can we do? Maybe we are not all teachers, but we all have gifts to share. Go out and make a difference in someone's life. Help grow and spread the Kingdom.



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