

**JULY 23, 2017
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME**

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Quite often, big things come from humble beginnings. Such is the Kingdom of God. The parables in today's Gospel highlight how God's Kingdom comes into being from tiny beginnings. These "Kingdom Parables" do not refer to a place or a time; rather the Kingdom is primarily an environment, a situation where God's values prevail. The divine values in practice are nothing but the deepest human values and aspirations as mirrored in the life of Jesus, who is Himself the Revelation of God to us in accessible human form. These values include truth, love, compassion, justice, forgiveness, mercy, understanding, and a deep respect for the dignity of every other human. People who, individually and collectively, try to live these values belong to the Kingdom of God. They are united with the rule of God in trying to build a world we would all like to see happen. It is something for the here and now. It is the vocation of the Church, and therefore the vocation of every member of the Church. The Kingdom however, extends beyond the Church. There are people, who may not explicitly know Christ or express allegiance to Christ, yet they live the ideals and the values of the Kingdom in their lives.

The first is the parable of the weeds among the wheat which stresses the final judgment when the Son of Man will deliver the final verdict which will condemn the children of the evil one (the weeds) and extol the children of the kingdom (the wheat). The parable is saying that people who are filled with the vision and values of God must learn to live side by side with a whole spectrum of people who, in varying degrees, do not yet share or live this vision and these values. The parable tells us that each one of us is a combination of wheat and weeds. The Kingdom of God calls people to attain the highest ideals and greatest

generosity. It also calls for a great measure of tolerance, patience and understanding in seeing the Kingdom become a reality. The conversion of our societies into Kingdom-like communities is a very gradual process. The coming of the Kingdom then is not going to be a neat and tidy process. Our experience again and again confirms that whenever we try to bring about change and reforms to any community, it is challenged. The parable reminds us that in each one of us there are elements of the Kingdom and elements that are deeply opposed to it.

The next two parables point to other characteristics of the Kingdom. The parable of the mustard seed shows that the work of the Kingdom has tiny beginnings but ends with extraordinarily large results. There is no attempt to explain how this happens. There is nothing about it that would attract attention, wonder and admiration. It takes place in a quiet way. Such is the kingdom of heaven. Its growth is miraculous and mysterious and rooted in the things of our common experience. The challenge is always to see the extraordinary in the ordinary.

In the third parable, the Kingdom is compared to a small amount of yeast in a large batch of dough. Its presence cannot be easily detected for it is totally blended with and is part of its environment. The whole point of the parable lies in the transforming power of the leaven. Leaven changed the character of whole baking, making bread soft, porous and spongy, tasty and good to eat. The introduction of the leaven causes a transformation in the dough and similarly the coming of the Kingdom causes transformation in life.

Summing up the three parables we see a specific development of God's Kingdom among us. The Kingdom of God is going to be, on the whole, a messy business in which the good and bad, the strong and the weak, the clean and the corrupt will rub shoulder to shoulder both inside the Church and outside it. To try to create islands of absolute integrity is not realistic and is even self-defeating. Secondly, no matter how small the beginnings, if we are faithful to the spirit and values of the Kingdom,

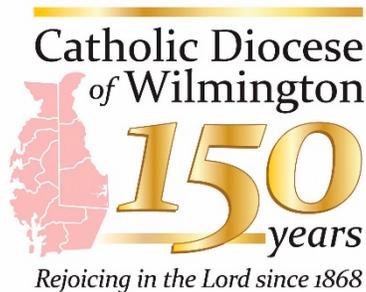
we can be sure that difficult obstacles, threats and even dangers can be overcome. Finally, a Kingdom-community, even though very small, can exert a real influence on the growth of the environment of which it is fully a part and be instrumental in spreading Kingdom values as the accepted values. Let us today pray for the Church that it may experience the fullness of growth through the presence of Jesus among us.

May God bless you,

Monsignor Hurley

150TH ANNIVERSARY PILGRIMAGE

As part of the Diocese of Wilmington's 150th anniversary celebration, a pilgrimage to Anney, Rome and Assisi will take place April 16 – 26, 2018. *And you are invited!*



Anney, the birthplace of Saint Francis de Sales, patron saint of the Diocese of Wilmington, is an alpine town in southeastern France, where Lake Annecy

feeds into the Thiou River. It's known for its cobbled streets, winding canals, and pastel-colored houses. Rome, Italy's capital, is a sprawling, cosmopolitan city with nearly 3,000 years of globally influential art, architecture and culture on display, including ancient ruins such as the Forum and the Colosseum. It is the home of Vatican City, headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums, as well as the burial place of Blessed Pope Pius IX, the diocese's founder. Assisi is a hill town in central Italy's Umbria region. It was the birthplace of St. Francis, one of Italy's patron saints. For more information about this affordable, once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage, including a day-to-day itinerary, exclusive features, and pricing, go to www.cdow.org/anniversary-pilgrimage.

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, July 24

6:00pm – Paul L. Davies

Tuesday, July 25

8:00am – Special Intention

Wednesday, July 26

8:00am – John P. 'Jack' Crowley

Thursday, July 27

8:00am – Nello M. Paoli, Sr.

Saturday, July 29

5:00pm – Stephanie & Margaret
Quinlan

Sunday, July 30

8am – Mass for the People
10am – Mary Iorri

BAPTISM

For parents who wish to have their babies baptized the next class will take place on Tuesday, September 12, at 7:00pm in the church. For further information and to register, please call the rectory office at 658-5131

RETRouvaille

Retrouvaille may be the way to rediscover and rekindle the loving relationship in your marriage. Tens of thousands of couples have successfully saved their marriages by attending a Retrouvaille weekend and the six post sessions that follow it. The next program begins the weekend of August 11-13 at the Family Life Center in Malvern, PA. For more information, or to register for one of our weekends, visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com or call 1-800-470-2230.

LAST WEEKEND'S OFFERTORY

\$2, 874.00

Thank you for your generosity

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage Moments: "For we do not know how to pray as we ought." (Romans 8: 26) Praying together is one of the most intimate (and scary) deeds a couple can do. Revealing our innermost thoughts and feelings can be a risk.

Parenting Pointers When speaking to your kids (or anyone) consider these proverbs: "It is better to leave angry words unspoken than to mend the heart those words have broken." and "The tongue is the only instrument that gets sharper with use."

VOCATION REFLECTION

In today's second reading, St. Paul tells the Romans (*and us*) that "the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit." He's speaking, of course, about the Holy Spirit, Who knows God's unique plan for each one of us. What are you doing to try to discern God's plan *for you*? Suppose God is calling you to priesthood or to religious life? How would you know? If you'd like to talk about it, please call or write Father Norm Carroll, Diocesan Director of Priestly and Religious Vocations (302-573-3113 or vocations@cdow.org). Be sure to visit our website: www.cdow.org/vocations!

GOD IS ON THE AIR

Listen to Catholic Forum every Sunday morning at 10:05 a.m. on WDEL 101.7 FM, 1150 AM and www.wdel.com. Next Sunday, July 30th, Catholic author and humorist, Susie Lloyd, will discuss her book, "Bless Me, Father, for I Have Kids." For photos, information regarding upcoming guests, podcasts and more, "Like" Catholic Forum on Facebook at www.facebook.com/catholicforum. Listen to past episodes of Catholic Forum online at cdow.org/communications or search "Catholic Forum" on Apple Podcasts or iHeartRadio podcasts.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PILGRIMAGE

The Legion of Mary, Wilmington Curia invites you to attend their Pilgrimage to the National Blue Army Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima at 674

Mountain View Road East, Asbury, NJ 08802 on Saturday, July 29, 2017. The bus will be leaving at 8am from St. John the Beloved Church, 907 Milltown Road, Wilmington, and return approximately 6:30pm. The event will include talks, Mass, Rosary, Adoration, etc. The cost will be \$30.00 per person. To reserve a bus seat contact: Sally Rogers at 302-563-1490 or Kay Malone at 302-239-2259 by Sunday, July 16, 2017. Make check payable to Wilmington Curia and mail to: Sally Rogers, 107 Loretta Lane, Bear, DE 19701.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

Only YOU can set marriage fires! Want to find out how to keep yours burning? Take each other on a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The next weekend is November 3-5, 2017. To receive more information or to apply, call Tony and Linda Massino, 302-220-9833.

THE FEAST OF ST. JAMES - July 25

Nothing is known of St. James the Greater's early life, though it has been established that he is the son of Zebedee and Salome and brother of John the Apostle.

The title "the Greater" was added to St. James' name to help distinguish him from the Apostle James "the Less," who is believed to have been shorter than James "the Greater."

St James was one of Jesus' first disciples. Later, he was one of only three called by Jesus to witness his Transfiguration, and when he and his brother wanted to call fire upon a Samaritan town, both were rebuked by Jesus.

Following Christ's Ascension, James spread the Gospel across Israel and the Roman kingdom as well. He traveled and spread the Word for nearly forty years in Spain. Later, James returned to Jerusalem but was martyred for his faith by King Herod, who decapitated him. Saint James the Greater is known as the first apostle to die.

CELEBRATING CHILDREN AT SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE



TO THE PARENTS OF OUR YOUNG CHILDREN, MAY WE SUGGEST ...

Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house.
All are welcome!

Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on. They tire of seeing the backs of others' heads.

Quietly explain the parts of the Mass and actions of the priest, deacon, lector, etc.

Sing the hymns, pray and voice the responses. Children learn liturgical behavior by copying you.

If you have to leave the Mass with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."

Remember that the way we welcome children in Church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship.

TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH

The presence of children is a gift to the Church, and they are a reminder that our parish is growing.

Please welcome our children and give support and a smile of encouragement to their parents.