

JANUARY 30, 2026 FATHER MICHAEL COUTTS

Our first reading of David, Bathsheba, and Uriah the Hittite reads like an episode from *The Young and Restless*.

Fortunately, I never watched any of it, but I'd get a synopsis from my mother, literally every week, and I'd store it in short-term memory, forgetting it almost immediately.

But here's a story of somebody with great power who decides to use his power indiscriminately.

The ironic thing is, or the wonderful thing about God's kindness, is that when David repented, God still accepted him, and not only that, but David was a standard by which all kings after David were judged.

They were either good, as Good King David, or they were bad because they did not follow in David's footsteps.

Coming to our gospel today, we have two parables, and Jesus, as a teacher, was a teacher *par excellence*.

He would use the everyday examples. He would use experience from daily life in order to tell them about the Kingdom of God.

There are two parables here, totally different, but common in the sense of it is a seed that is sown.

These parables were probably told at different times in different places and in order to have a different audience.

But they are same in this sense. Namely, they speak about the Kingdom of God.

In the gospel of Saint Mark, the first eight chapters, Jesus is constantly telling His disciples:

“You have eyes, but you do not see.
You have ears, but you do not hear.
And your hearts are so hardened.”

Jesus seems to be so frustrated that, in chapter nine, He would say:

“What am I to do with you?
How long am I going to bear with you?”

And therefore, the first parable of a sower that sows the seed into the ground and sleeps day and night and does not bother about the seed seems to fit the disciples so very well.

Jesus would speak to them. They would not hear. They would not see. They would not have their hearts open, but the seed was still sown.

And like the farmer who did not care—or rather, he did care, but did not watch over the seed day and night—he took care of cleaning his barns, cleaning the silos, cleaning the instruments with which he would harvest.

He would let the seed grow.

First a little sprout, then a stalk, then a head, then the grain in the head.

And so too with the Kingdom of God with the disciples. It would be there, and eventually, it would grow into a wonderful harvest.

And we see billions of people believing thanks to their preaching and proclaiming the gospel of the Lord.

I recently received a letter from an 89-year-old widow who said to me:

“I've been a widow for almost a quarter of a century.

I emigrated from Ireland at the age of 20, and I brought my children up in the faith.

My husband was a non-Catholic, so he was not much of help, but I baptized them.

I prepared them for communion, because we didn't have Catholic schools in the area in that part of Ontario.

And then, I prepared their dresses and I prepared their suits for first communion.

“Well, Father, what am I going to do?

They don't practise their faith—neither my sons, nor my grandsons, nor my great-grandchildren.”

And I said to her:

“What is your idea of the Kingdom of God?”

She said:

“Everything has to be in place.

They have to be baptized.

They have to be married.

They have to be taught.”

And that is very good—discipline and order—but God's Kingdom is rather messy.

He says:

“Go out to the highways and byways that force people to come into the banquet.”

And Jesus, Himself, said:

“The tax collectors and prostitutes are entering into the Kingdom of God before you scribes and Pharisees.”

She said:

“Well, I asked the, uh—advice from the priest, and one of them said, ‘Leave everything in the hands of God.’

“And another priest said to me, ‘Well, you have to constantly tell them that they are Catholic, that they have to practise their faith.’”

I said:

“I don't want to sit on the fence, but it's a bit of both.

“Leave everything into the hands of God, but in a gentle way you can remind them.

““You know, today was the day that I took you to church and had you baptized.

Do you remember this was the day that your father and I went to church and got married?””

Gentle like the rain that falls on the ground.

And, believe me, the Kingdom of God will be in their midst, because you have sown a seed, and it will grow in good time.

And how will it grow?

And that brings us to the second parable, the parable of the mustard seed.

It is so small. It is so insignificant.

Our work with our children, our grandchildren, our work as priests, as religious, as teachers of the Catholic faith, seems to be so small, infinitesimal, and it does not seem to bear much fruit.

But it grows, and it grows, and it grows.

God's grace never is in vain.

And it'll grow into a tree, and then suddenly you will find everybody wants to be a part of it.

In the UK, we are told that the younger generation—the Millennials, or Generation X, Z, or I can't understand what generation they are—are flocking to the Church today because suddenly the Kingdom of God is sprouting in a way none of us even imagined.

The Kingdom of God is your responsibility and mine, in the way we live our lives and unfold it, so that we can show that God's grace is taking part of it.

But as for the others, leave them in the hands of God with a gentle reminder here and there.

God bless you, all.