

Mission has Small Beginnings

Jesus was a “master-teacher.” This is shown in today’s two short “kingdom” parables of the mustard seed and the yeast. Significant Church movements and mission initiatives often result from “the smallest of all seeds” and from “a bit of yeast.” The change begins “from within”: the seed is planted in the ground and the yeast is mixed into the flour.

Growth, change, and transformation in our lives as Christians begins with the small seed of faith, planted at our Baptism. As we cooperate with God’s grace, its transforming power and effects are seen. This fact has been verified in Church history. From a small band of ordinary disciples the Catholic Church has grown into a worldwide community of 1.6 billion people today. Beginning with one person, Saint Mother Teresa proceeded to pick up thousands of destitute people. She has expressed how God uses our littleness to achieve His mission.

Mother Teresa has said: “In this life we cannot always do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” “I am a little pencil in God’s hands. He does the thinking; he does the writing. He does everything and sometimes it is really hard, because it is a broken pencil and He has to sharpen it a little more.”

Mother Teresa’s patron saint was Therese of Lisieux. She, like many people, was attracted to “the little way” of Saint Therese, the Church’s Patroness of Mission and a Doctor of the Church. Her “spirituality” means seeking “holiness of life” in the ordinary aspects of everyday existence. This approach puts holiness within the reach of ordinary people like you and me. Both of these missionary saints are beautiful examples of how God uses “littleness” to achieve His mission. We ask ourselves: How can I live Jesus’ call to missionary discipleship in the simple, daily events of my life?