

Birkenhead, Sunday 18th November 2023

25th Sunday after Pentecost

6th after Epiphany

“This indeed is the smallest of all the seeds; but when it grows up it is larger than any herb and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches.”¹

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

The parable, which is proposed to our meditation for this morning, however being short, could nourish our spiritual life above all expectation. One more time, the Lord is teaching us about the benefit we could be given, if we were truly and devoutly receiving the Holy Eucharist.

The seed of the first parable, the leaven of the second, represent the same and unique mystery, unveiling a different aspect of it. The seed brings our attention to its very small size, and the massive tree it could plant and grow. The second shows us what kind of ferment it could be, when properly mixed into our spiritual life.

The Holy Eucharist will produce the same treasures and mysteries in our soul, providing our good dispositions to receive it. But as the Little Flower herself told us, without this manna coming down from heaven, our soul remains “a plot of waste ground.”² This Blessed Sacrament will provide us with many graces and blessings if we let ourselves being modelled by Him, and if we give all permission for His Blessed Mother to arrange it. No one better than the Ark of the New Covenant, could do this so perfectly:

“At the time of Holy Communion, I sometimes picture my soul under the figure of a little child of three or four years, who at play has got its hair tossed and its clothes soiled. But very soon the Blessed Virgin hastens to my aid: quickly she takes off my little dirty pinafore, smooths my hair and adorns it with a pretty ribbon or simply with a little flower... and this suffices to render me pleasing and enables me to sit at the Banquet of Angels without blushing.”³

Since our soul has been arranged and prepared by Our Lady, our task would be to keep it tidy at all time, to remain worthy of the honour we are about to receive, or we just received. But our wounded nature is so weak, that it may fail at all time. Again, the help of heaven is required for us not to faint on our way. St Thérèse continues:

“I imagine my soul to be as a plot of waste ground and beg the Blessed Virgin to remove from it all the rubbish—meaning its imperfections; then I beseech her to erect thereon, a vast canopy worthy of Heaven and to decorate it with her own treasures, and I invite all the Angels and Saints to come and sing

¹ Mt., XIII, 32. 6th Sunday after Epiphany.

² St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Story of a Soul, Chp. V.

³ St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Story of a Soul, Chp. VIII.

canticles of love. It seems to me then that Jesus is pleased to see Himself so magnificently received; and I, I share His joy. All this does not hinder distractions and sleep from molesting me; therefore, it not rarely happens that I resolve to continue my thanksgiving all the day long, since I have made it so badly in the Choir.”⁴

Our weakness is so extreme that, very unfortunately, we cannot provide anything good without the divine help. Even to say a simple thank you, we are in need of Him. What a humiliation for us, although we just receive the King of kings. In our thanksgiving, Jesus is desiring to help us again, maintaining it throughout the day. We’ve been unable to keep ourselves concentrated during our prayer time. Let’s repair it with our offering of the day, to continuously immolate ourselves upon the altar of His Sacred Heart.

Jesus would like to share the same intimacy with us, with the same simplicity he had with St Therese. Relying on God and Our Lady for everything regarding the reception of such a Sacrament, no doubt that our little Saint made quick progress in her union with God. She shows us a very simple way of Love and Humility to attain high degrees of perfection. This perfection is easily understood, since Our Lord Himself, the Perfect One, has been visiting this little soul, being for her the leaven of today’s parable.

This “fermentum”, using the old latin word to speak about Holy Eucharist, will have the same results than the leaven in the bread. It will lift up our heart and soul towards heaven, where it come from. For sure, our defects will always attract us towards the earth, and will stick us to it, like the uncooked bread is attaching the dish. But this ferment will make our soul light and aerial, and will help us to attain the perfection God is desiring for us.

“What a sanctuary is the soul that has just received Holy Communion! The Eucharist first gives us Christ’s Body and Blood; It gives us the Divinity of the Word indissolubly united to the Human Nature; through the Word, our soul is united to the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the indivisibility of their uncreated nature. The Trinity dwells in us; our soul becomes the heaven whence are wrought the mysterious operations of the divine life.

We can offer to the Father the Son of His dilection, that He may anew place in Him all His delight; we can offer this delight to Jesus so that the ineffable joys that He experienced at the moment of His Incarnation may be renewed within His blessed soul; we can pray the Holy Ghost to be the bond of love that unites us to the Father and the Son...

Only faith can comprehend these marvels, and plunge into these abysses : *Mysterium fidei.*”⁵

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

⁴ St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Story of a Soul, Chp. V.

⁵ Dom Marmion, Chris in his Mysteries. XVIII, *in mei memoriam*, 5.