

**Have you ever wondered:**

**If you were alive when Christ walked the earth**

**Would you have been one of his followers?**

**It wasn't an automatic thing**

**So many of his followers stayed with him when things were easy**

**Heard his teaching and saw his miracles**

**But abandoned him when he taught difficult things**

**As we enter into Ordinary Time**

**This is a time of growing in faith and devotion**

**The big liturgical feasts are finished for the year**

**And we have time to reflect on our faith**

**What is it based on?**

**Are there teachings I struggle with?**

**What do I do with these teachings?**

**I can let them sit on the back burner**

**As long as I am not challenged specifically, let them be**

**Perhaps I can say that is what the Church teaches**

**So I will follow it**

**A blind faith**

**Or I can try to dig into them**

**Deeper and deeper**

**To try to see why the Church teaches this or that**

**Doing this, Ordinary Time becomes an opportunity to walk with Christ**

**To open our hearts to his**

**And allow his love to touch us**

**So we can return that love to Him**

**There is something important in our readings today**

**Many grand events have almost insignificant beginnings**

**We often want to be involved with the flashy**

**Like jumping on the bandwagon of a successful sports team**

**But in life**

**Especially in the spiritual life**

**Small beginnings allow for deep roots**

**To be able to see these**

**We follow St Paul's teaching**

**We Christians walk by faith**

**Not by sight**

**This gives us a new worldview**

**Not one limited by our senses**

**There is more to life than what we see, feel, taste, and measure**

**Our physical senses only take us so far**

**Politically, culturally, economically we see the same world**

**But then our faith adds another dimension**

**Not opposed to the use of reason, but beyond it**

**This is what Ezekiel saw**

**He lived at a very low point in the Israelite community**

**They had turned away from God**

**Ezekiel was a prophet**

**Calling them back to God**

**Much of his writings were difficult for the people to hear**

**They thought they would be protected**

**After all, they were God's Chosen People**

**But in the end they were conquered**

**Not only once, but many times**

**Then they were taken into exile**

**Now the promises of God seemed to be impossible dreams**

**Ezekiel too was taken into exile**

**And the writing we have today is one of hope**

**Despite everything they are experiencing**

**God makes a promise through Ezekiel**

**He will take a tender shoot from the crest of a cedar**

**He will replant it on the mountain heights of Israel**

**Birds of every kind will be drawn to it**

**Things are not as they seem**

**Ezekiel is calling on them to see by faith, not sight alone**

**The cedar is the kingdom of David**

**It has been decimated, but not destroyed**

**The tender shoot from this tree**

**This is Jesus, the Son of David**

**Through Christ, he will restore David's kingdom**

**The birds of the air**

**These are the nations of the world**

**These will be drawn to the Kingdom of God**

**This forms the basis of Christ's parable on the Kingdom of God**

**His parables were based on familiar, everyday things in life**

**They could be understood in many ways**

**For some people, there may not be any understanding**

**For others confusion or impatience**

**But to his disciples, he explained everything in private**

**Today he speaks of seeds**

**Spreading them on a field**

**Not knowing if they will germinate**

**But trusting they will**

**And what does the farmer do?**

**He rises in the morning and sleeps at night**

**And when it matures**

**He takes the sickle and harvests it**

**Of its own accord, the land bears fruit**

**The farmer is not a passive bystander**

**He tills and plants and harvests**

**But he walks by faith that the land will respond**

**Then Christ looks at the mustard seed**

**Not literally the smallest of seeds**

**But a very small seed**

**And it doesn't literally grow into the largest of plants**

**But it does become a very large plant**

**A plant that draws the birds of the sky**

**To come and dwell in its shade**

**As in our reading from Ezekiel**

**The birds of the sky**

**The nations of the world will be drawn to God's kingdom**

**When doing God's work**

**In our families**

**In our schools**

**At our workplaces**

**We begin small**

**And we walk by faith**

**Sometimes we look at the world and ask**

**What is God doing?**

**Why doesn't he act more concretely?**

**But this is human reasoning**

**Look at a seed**

**With all our scientific advances**

**We know a lot about seeds**

**An acorn contains everything within it that will become a giant Oak**

**A single grain of corn contains everything that will become a  
corn plant**

**With one or two ears**

**Each containing 100 or more seeds**

**We can manipulate the genes in a seed**

**Make them resistant to this or that disease**

**But with all this and more**

**What do we really know about a seed?**

**We cannot send scientists into a room and tell them to build a seed**

**I may have told this before**

**But it is like a scientist calling out to God**

**I have discovered the secret to life**

**God puts him into a laboratory**

***Ok, create life***

**And the scientist says first I have to outside and get some dirt**

**And God says**

***No, you have this room with all your scientific advances***

***Make your own dirt***

**We walk by faith**

**We see God has his hands on the reins**

**He is always active in governing the world**

**He wants us to recognize this**

**To work with him**

**And to begin small**

**Like he does**

**With Abraham and Sarah**

**Each over 100 years old**

**And he gives them a son**

**Joseph, sold into slavery by his brothers**

**And he rescues the entire Israelite nation from famine**

**Moses**

**A Hebrew male who was to be killed when he was born**

**And he leads the Israelite nation to the Promised Land**

**Jesus Christ**

**12 uneducated followers as Apostles**

**Humanly, an utter failure**

**Hung on a cross as a political enemy of the state**

**But the seed is planted**

**It takes root in the resurrection and Pentecost**

**And the tree is in all corners of the world**

**Again and again, when something is needed**

**A seed is planted**

**Francis of Assisi**

**Ignatius of Loyola**

**Charles Lwanga**

**Mother Theresa**

**The list goes on and on**

**Hopeless situations and failures by sight**

**Mustard seeds and giant trees by faith**

**God has His role**

**And He is faithful**

**Each of us have our own roles**

**And when we are faithful**

**No matter how little we are able to offer**

**It makes a difference in God's hands**

**And His Church**

**His Kingdom will continue to grow and flourish**

**When we walk by faith**