

Two years ago, Pope Francis established the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, to be celebrated every year on the fourth Sunday of July. The pope spoke of grandparents providing a younger generation a link to generations who have passed away. We are called to value and heed the wisdom and experience of our elderly. In today's Gospel, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a tiny mustard seed that over time grows to be a huge bush. Today's elderly were all once tiny mustard seeds themselves. With the Lord's blessings, they have persevered and thrived and continue to help realize the kingdom of heaven in this world.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 106

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 6

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 92

A reading from the Book of Wisdom

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all. For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity. But though you are

master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you. And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

R/. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

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You, O LORD, are good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.

Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my pleading. **R/**.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship you, O LORD,
and glorify your name. For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; you alone are God. **R/**.

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity.

Turn toward me, and have pity on me; give your strength to your servant. **R/**.

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Romans 8:26-27

Brothers and sisters: The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-43 or 13:24-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Glory to you, Lord

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

[He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'"

He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet:

I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.

Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear."]

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- When Pope Francis instituted the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly and called it to be celebrated on the Sunday closest to the feast day of Saints Joachim and Anne, he spoke of the value of the elderly. He said they were the link between the generations, passing on the wisdom of their own formative years to the generation being born now. He would know from experience. His own father's family fled the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini in 1929 to emigrate to Argentina. No doubt his father, who was twenty-one when the family fled Italy, taught his children about the dangers of fascism, which, like the weeds sown in the field of Jesus' parable, threatens the wheat that provides food and nutrition.
- Especially back in Jesus' time, the bane of a wheat farmer's work was darnel, a toxic weed often called "false wheat," for darnel and wheat look very much alike until each blossoms. What farmers think is wheat may turn out to be darnel, but what they assume is darnel may turn out to be wheat. Hence the words of caution the parable's farmer expresses about pulling up the weeds prematurely. Those whom we now identify as evil may grow and transform and eventually blossom as righteous and good. Our neighbors—as well as ourselves—have an entire lifetime to change, to mature, to leaven, before the harvest comes.
- Consequently, Jesus counsels patience for those who tend the wheat fields. Do not judge or condemn prematurely! As we heard in Wisdom, God judges with clemency, governs with leniency, applies justice with kindness, and permits repentance for sins. Paul points out the advantage we have in the Holy Spirit, who comes to our aid in our weaknesses. We are not perfect. We are not strong enough ourselves to always avoid sin, to always do the right thing. But the Holy Spirit is strong enough. If we heed the movement of the Spirit in our lives, we can blossom, nourishing others with the fruit we bear.

Question of the Week

What substantial service can I provide this week to someone who is elderly, whether a member of my family or not? What can I learn from this action?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We call to mind our needs and the needs of our brothers and sisters, confident that the one who searches hearts understands the groanings of the Holy Spirit within us, who intercedes on our behalf.

- For the Church, that just as the mature mustard tree is a dwelling place for the birds of the sky, we may be a dwelling place for all people, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That leaders in government will promote the dignity of all persons, especially those whose voices are often not heard, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For grandparents and the elderly, that they may be blessed with strength and good health as they pass on the treasure of their faith to new generations, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For judges, prosecutors, attorneys, and all who work in the legal system, that they may judge with clemency and temper justice with mercy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all of us, that we may be yeast in our parish, in our community, and in the world, nurturing and building each for the better, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray....? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you give life and love to all your children, sown across the field of the world. May we bear fruit for your kingdom, spreading your love and grace to our sisters and brothers as you hear our fervent prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 140

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**