

COLUMNISTS

Great things happen from small beginnings

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 4:26-34. (R1) Ezekiel 17:22-24. (R2) 2 Corinthians 5:6-10.

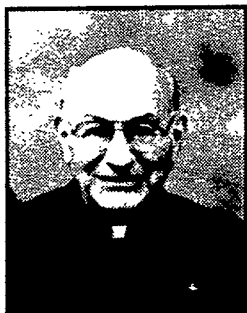
Jesus said to the crowd: "This is how it is with the reign of God. A man scatters seed on the ground."

I think we'd call that very inefficient farming. A lot of good seed would be lost if we simply scattered seed upon the ground, but Jesus was not giving us a lesson on agriculture. He was telling us about the kingdom of God. And he was saying that the tiniest of seeds can produce an enormous harvest.

About 145 years ago Jean Henri Dunant woke up in his beloved Switzerland. He heard a big commotion down in the streets. He dressed and went down to see what was going on. He heard that war had started in Italy. So he packed up a few things and set out for Italy; he wanted to see for himself just what was going on.

Henri arrived in Italy where he saw soldiers fighting near the town of Castiglione. Everyone seemed to be shooting at everyone else. He watched men hit by bullets, give horrible cries and fall to the ground. Henri had never seen anything like that before. He felt he had to do something. So at dusk he went to the nearby town to ask people, the ordinary citizens, to go to the battlefield with him. They did and they spent the night there giving as much aid as they could to the wounded men.

When Henri returned home, he



a word for sunday

By FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

couldn't forget what he had seen. He described the horror of battle and men being shot. He also suggested that every country should have a relief society to administer emergency service to wounded soldiers.

Five years later such a rescue society was organized in Geneva, Switzerland in 1864. It was called the Red Cross. Other countries soon joined. Everyone forgot all about Henri until an article appeared in a newspaper in 1895. In 1901 Henri was given the very first Nobel Peace Prize.

Whoever would have thought that something as seemingly insignificant as watching a battle would bring about so much good? Henri's seed germinated and helped millions of people all over the world. That's the way the kingdom works - from tiny seeds great harvests; from small acorns great oaks.

A second lesson is that growth is occurring even when it is not evident to us. "The soil produces of itself first the

blade, then the ear, finally the ripe wheat in the ear." What causes seeds to sprout is still a mystery to us. Scientists have not been able to create a synthetic seed and make it grow. Growth is a mystery.

Our task is to plant seeds. St. Paul said, "I planted, Apollo's watered, but God caused the growth" (1 Cor 3:6). Often we lose patience and wonder what the use is. We don't see anything coming from our efforts and we tend to give up. But just when we are ready to give up God causes some of the seed to sprout.

One step won't take you very far;
You've got to keep on walking;
One word won't tell folks who you are;
You've got to keep on talking;
One inch won't make you very tall;
You've got to keep on growing;
One deed won't do it all;
You've got to keep on going.

The upshot of all this is that great things happen from small beginnings. Jesus likened the reign of God to a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds; but from it grows the largest of all shrubs with branches big enough for the birds of the sky to build their nests in.

I bet you don't recognize the name Rita Rizzo. Rita had a rough childhood spent mostly in poverty. As a young girl she decided to become a nun. Just 16 years ago, she felt God was calling her in to television ministry. She didn't know a darn thing about television except how to turn it on. She prayed and prayed, then decided to go ahead. With only

\$200 in her pocket and a handful of other sisters, she launched into the unknown - the television industry. Today this sister is seen by millions of people on her twice-weekly program, "Mother Angelica Live." And she touches the hearts of millions. She started with almost nothing.

All God asks is that we sow the seed. He makes it grow.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, June 16
2 Corinthians 6:1-10;
Matthew 5:38-42
Tuesday, June 17
2 Corinthians 8:1-9;
Matthew 5:43-48
Wednesday, June 18
2 Corinthians 9:6-11;
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday, June 19
2 Corinthians 11:1-11;
Matthew 6:7-15
Friday, June 20
2 Corinthians 11:18, 21-30;
Matthew 6:19-23
Saturday, June 21
2 Corinthians 12:1-10;
Matthew 6:24-34

COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

MERCHANDISE

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