

**Eleventh Sunday Ordinary Time – B – 2018**  
**Ex. 17.22-24///2Cor. 5.6-10///Mark 4.26-34**

→one of the longest running comic strips that appears in hundreds of newspapers each day is

“Peanuts” by Charles Schulz

→it has won the praise/delight of many people around the world

→and the characters of Charlie Brown/Snoopy/Lucy/Linus/Marcie and Schroeder have become household names for us

→every day in the newspaper and occasionally on television they amuse us with their simplicity and honesty about life and human nature

→and perhaps THAT IS the drawing card of the comic strip “Peanuts”

→because for years they have intrigued us with their simple yet honest look at life

→maybe what is most appealing about “Peanuts”.....is that it is grounded in ordinary daily life....telling it the way it is....teaching basic life lessons straightforwardly and honestly.

→in some ways “Peanuts” is very much like the parables of Jesus...and very similar to the two brief examples we hear about in today’s gospel episode....because they present us with pictures of the way life is.....

→[and ] that is what makes the parables so effective

→they are basic, simple stories....[snapshots if you will] that teach us about life and how to live it

→they tease us and urge us.....and they challenge us to think more deeply about life and about the activity and presence of God in our lives.

→in today's gospel reading, Mark provides us with two such stories, two pictures of life

→and both are parables of contrast and growth

→that entice us to think about our lives...our faith...and how we are living it out

→the 1<sup>st</sup> parable...about the seed growing into the harvest tells us much about the world we live in

→the parable of the growing seed into an abundant harvest.....ultimately reminds us that we need to be responsible for what we have been given in this world

→that as stewards of creation, we are responsible for one another, for the world and for all the resources and environment to which we have been entrusted.

→and being responsible....being trustworthy...being accountable.. is the only way the seeds will continue to grow into the harvest

-----and so, the point of this parable is that ...taking care of the SEEDS is our responsibility...OUR CHALLENGE ---to take care of the world, our environment, our family

→and we do that best by how we live, by how we speak, by how we act

→a simple lesson that contains quite a challenge [however]

→the 2<sup>nd</sup> parable...parable of the mustard seed assures us that from humble beginnings come big endings

----that from a simple beginning 2000 years ago, from the beginning of time....God has been present to us and we have been discovering that presence

→and now, our challenge remains...to discover God at work in our lives

→i.o.w.----we need to continue to bring about the kingdom of God

PAUSE

→the point of this parable of the mustard seed is that....the task of bringing about the kingdom of God...is again our responsibility...our challenge....our duty

→and sometimes this can be accomplished in the smallest of things in the course of everyday life....and that is why the mustard seed is referred to today

→very simply put....what Jesus is telling us...is not to underestimate our potential

---do not underestimate **the impact** that a warm smile, an appreciative thank you, a heart-felt compliment or a timely phone call or visit.....can have on someone

→[and]...simply put...that is what taking care of one another is all about

→today....we are presented with two very simple stories that tell us much about life...just like the Peanuts comic strip does each and every day

PAUSE

→but have you ever noticed that poor Charlie Brown....always seems to underestimate himself...he often calls himself a blockhead

→he ends up going to see Lucy for advice....and she charges him a nickel...and then she is the one who pulls the football out from under him

→he waits for the great pumpkin each year

→and every Christmas...he picks the homeliest of all trees

→but in the end.....Charlie Brown always come out on top.....he always turns nothing into something great...

→our gospel stories today, likewise, show us the very same thing...how an insignificant seed can turn into the biggest of bushes

→how a simple action can truly be a life-changing lesson

PAUSE

→we have been entrusted to bring about and spread the kingdom of God here on earth

→and we do that best by making sure we take care of what we have and each other...  
with a simple smile...a kind word...a cheerful hello

→in the end...THAT can become the richest harvest of all

→[perhaps] we just now need to do a little more planting among one another