

**My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**Once again the Gospel provides us with a number of parables Jesus told to give us a sense of what he calls the “Kingdom of Heaven”. Parables were a common way of communicating in the Jewish world in which Jesus lived. According to Amy-Jill Levine, a Jewish scholar of the Christian Scriptures, “Jesus’ first listeners would have known that parables and the tellers of parables were there to prompt them to see the world in a different way, to challenge, and at times to accuse.”**

**Now I know very little about farming and probably less about baking. However I do know that a seed that is sowed or planted in the ground establishes all kinds of roots before its first shoot ever sprouts through the earth. I also know that just a pinch of yeast will in time cause a whole batch of dough to rise to a loaf of bread. We see the difference between leavened and unleavened bread in the hosts we receive in communion. The hosts are flat and rather tasteless because they have no yeast in them. So the first thing we might understand the Lord to be telling us is that “the kingdom of heaven” is already here, but growing very slowly.**

**In his explanation of the “parable of the weeds in the field” Jesus identifies Himself as the Son of Man who sows good seed. It seems to me that “the good seed” of which he speaks is the seed of God’s mercy and love which he came to reveal to the world.**

**For our reflection this evening, I would like to challenge us to see this “Sower” in a different way. God Himself is the primary sower as the God of creation, but again and again He gave to His creatures the work of sowing the seeds of His mercy and love in the world. He inspired and directed Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt by giving him the courage to go before the Pharaoh demanding, “Let my people go”. He sent the angel Gabriel to Mary, asking her to be the Mother of His Son and, in a dream, to Joseph calling him to accept Mary as his wife. God also sent the prophets and Jesus sent the apostles with the same task—to plant the seeds of God’s mercy and love into the hearts of people. In most dramatic and phenomenal fashion, God planted Himself into the earth on the tree of the Cross of Calvary—dying on that tree only to be raised up three days later as the Risen Christ.**

**Through that action God sowed the seed of His mercy and love in the hearts of all who have come to believe that Jesus is the Risen Christ. By planting that seed into our hearts, God, in turn, has made us into sowers of “good seed”, even as enemies plant weeds or evil throughout the world.**

**It certainly is my job or mission as a proclaimer of God’s Word to plant into your hearts the seeds of God’s mercy and love which I do day-in-and-day-out, week-after-week. But it is your mission as well.**

**Yours, I believe, is the greater challenge. It is relatively easy to stand up here and speak fine thoughts and spout words of wisdom. It is far more difficult to live out that mission in the work place or in the school or in the neighborhood or on the playing field.**

**In this recent newsletter, we tell the stories of how many of you have taken up this great work of being sowers of good seed. Those who worked on publishing the newsletter, as well as the people whose works and stories they tell are all sowing good seed into the soil of our parish. While only about a quarter of our members worship with us weekly, this newsletter has been sent out to all 1,150 households registered in the parish. Perhaps these seeds are being planted in some households that are already choked off by weeds growing there, but, maybe, they will take root, as Jesus suggests the mustard seed overwhelms all the plants around it and “the kingdom of heaven” will prosper there as well.**

**Today my dear young people, we are sending you forth confidently as sowers of good seed. We know that the seeds of God’s mercy and love have been firmly planted in you by your loving families, by our Church family, by your teachers, and by your pastor—all who love you very much. In a few moments I will commission you as missionaries. And your mission is this—to sow seeds of God’s mercy and love in the hearts of all you meet.**

**You have courageously offered yourselves for this mission. You have faithfully raised funds for it and generously contributed your own money toward it. You have shown a level of commitment that is rare in people of any age, but to offer yourselves for such a mission while so young is awesome.**

**You are going to Greensboro, North Carolina, a place to which you have never been; to a people who are strangers to you; to do works of mercy and acts of kindness which perhaps you have never done before. All I ask of you, no matter what you are asked to do or who you are asked to serve, remember your mission—to plant the seeds of God’s mercy and love wherever and to whomever you can.**

**I also have to thank and commend the Core Team who will accompany you on this mission trip. They are freely giving of their time, leaving behind home and family, their jobs and their comforts, to accompany you at their own expense. They are going with you, not just as fellow-missionaries sowing the seeds of God’s mercy and love, but as role models from whom you can learn so much. Pay attention to them. They will show you how to live your lives generously for God and for his kingdom.**

**Two of them who are not here tonight because they have gone ahead of you, Bill and Maryann Mann flew down today to North Carolina, again at their own expense, because there wasn’t enough room in the vans for them. They chose to do this even though now in their 60s, with their own children grown and parents themselves, because they found such joy in the service they gave as Core Team members of Life Teen some twenty years ago.**

**They know, as I know, that there is no greater joy in life than to see the seeds of God's mercy and love grow in the hearts of our young people.**

**Finally, my dear, dear young people, remember this mission you are about to take up is divine; it is angelic; it is prophetic, apostolic; and it is, above all, Christ-like. Go forth now as members of Our Lady of Consolation Parish, or as our newsletter proclaims, we are The Joyful Family of God.**

**Those to be commissioned as missionaries are asked to step forward as your name is called:**

**KATE ROHRER                      JAROD DAGNEY                      COREY HADOROVICH**

**JAMES TYGIELSKI                      NICK TYGIELSKI                      AMIA REEVES**

**ABIGAIL SEMENECK                      MICHAEL WISHNESKI                      JACE ADAMS**

**PAUL TRZOS                      MARY TRZOS                      MATT CONROY**

**BRAEDAN AMOLE                      KATIE CELLINI                      MAVERICK MOWRER**

**MARISSA MOWRER                      JESUS DUENAS GONZALEZ**

**BILL MANN                      MARYANN MANN                      SANDY HODOROVICH**

**PAUL HARKINS                      JANICE DAGNEY**

**CHURCH, PLEASE PRAY FOR THEM!**