

- So we read that Jesus spoke often in parables, but to His own disciples explained everything.
  - Why didn't He just be more detailed in His explanations to everyone?
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  - Well, any good teacher understands that the best way to teach, and for their students to learn, is not by laying out everything for them, but rather to awaken the sense of the wonder of learning... to stir the curiosity of the mind and the soul...to lead the student to reflect on that which he is given—especially in things so multi-faceted as Jesus' teaching and the Word of God—so that the student will truly understand rather than just be able to regurgitate facts and phrases.
  - You scientists and engineers know this well. You probably remember those “Aha!” moments when something in mathematics or physics or your particular discipline suddenly “clicked”...opening up new avenues for clarity and understanding.
  - As an example, I remember that moment when integration “clicked”. “Ooohhhh...I get it!”...and calculus became so much clearer.
  - It's even more so with philosophy and theology; there's a point when reading some seemingly innocuous passage that makes it “click” for you...and so many things fall into place.
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  - This is why we ordained and catechists are always stressing the reading of scripture, the Catechism and other spiritual readings... because every person is different, and everyone was different triggers that lead to clarity, understanding...and fidelity.
  - ...especially remembering, as St. Jerome wrote: *“Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ.”*
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- This is one of the reasons, I think, that Jesus did not explicate His parable to His general audience, but did to His disciples—for He would be present to the disciples who traveled with Him, so He

could clarify any questions that the disciples had, but would not be so for the people in general. He had too much territory to cover, both in the sense of countryside and of teaching material.

- I know that, almost daily if not hourly, I wish I could send a text to Christ and ask: “What’s the best way to handle this situation? Am I doing the best thing by doing this or that?”
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- So...in such instances, where can we go? To the Catechism ... to scriptures...to Christ.
- Yes, we can look up various topics, but in doing so, we also read and learn of myriad others—opening up those avenues of understanding and learning if we simply heed the seeds of grace that are planted...and cultivate those seeds by continued curiosity and investigation...
- ...ultimately (hopefully) becoming better, more ardent and steadfast disciples of Our Lord.
- After all, as St. Paul reminds us today: *“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*
- What will we say before that judgment seat if we have ignored God’s own Word to us?
- So often I hear “I am just too busy.” Too busy to prepare for eternity? Really?
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- I often reflect upon what I will say when I appear before the judgment seat of God.
- “What about this, Padre? Why were you so neglectful in this or that?”
- “Well, I was afraid I might catch something.”
  - “Oh, really?”, says St. Damien of Molokai, who spent 15 years serving the lepers until he himself died of leprosy... and a legion of hospital workers.
- “Well...I was tired.”
  - “Oh, really?” says multitudes of contemplative religious who spend hours and hours, day and night, in supplicative prayer to God.

- “Well...I thought I might be criticized.”
  - “Oh, really?” replies the countless host of martyrs.
- “Well...I was hungry.”
  - “Oh, really?” responds the countless faithful poor who died of starvation.
- “Well...I was worried about having to endure the sorrow of it.”
  - “Oh, really?”, answers Our Blessed Mother.
- “Well...I was afraid I might suffer injury.”
  - “Oh, really?” replies Christ, glancing at the wounds in His hands and feet.
  
- So let us, as Paul exhorts us today, “aspire to please [Christ]”, by fidelity to Him, the moral law of God, and good works... remembering that “we walk by faith and not by sight” in our Christian hope, and that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.”
- ...remembering Jesus own words: “...*the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you.*” (Mark 4:24)...a wonderful expectation for those who do good, yet great sorrow and fear for those who do evil.

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- Finally, today...you fathers today you are rightfully honored for your role in the family—a role of leadership, of discipline, of providing, of teaching, of protecting, and of loving—your own role as shepherd in your family.
  - But while basking in the honors and affection of your children and grandchildren, do some introspection.
  
  - Are you being the best father you can be? Are you teaching your children truly the way of God...by teaching and, more importantly, by the example of your lives.

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- Fathers (and mothers) are the daily and primary educators of your children; even the Church cannot take your place in that role.
- God will not ask how many degrees you earned or what earthly honors you had, but simply how you have loved Him and neighbor...and taught your children so as well.
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- And how is a man a good father?
- We have to only adapt slightly Paul's verses:
  - *[A father] is patient, [a father] is kind; [a father] is not jealous or boastful; [a father] is not arrogant or rude.*
  - *[A father] does not insist on [his] own way; [a father] is not irritable or resentful; [he] does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.*
  - *[A father] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
  - *So [a father's] faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is [a father's] love. (cf., 1Cor 13:13)*
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- In these things, O fathers, you shepherd your family well...the father who sets example for his children...who teaches—and lives—the way of Jesus Christ...
- ...so that, at the setting of your days...when you finally cross the river, you may hear those words we long to hear: “*Well done, good and faithful servant. Come and share your master's joy.*”

**Reading 1 Ez 17:22-24**

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Thus says the Lord GOD:  
I, too, will take from the crest of the cedar,  
from its topmost branches tear off a tender shoot,  
and plant it on a high and lofty mountain;  
on the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it.  
It shall put forth branches and bear fruit,  
and become a majestic cedar.  
Birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it,  
every winged thing in the shade of its boughs.  
And all the trees of the field shall know  
that I, the LORD,  
bring low the high tree,  
lift high the lowly tree,  
wither up the green tree,  
and make the withered tree bloom.  
As I, the LORD, have spoken, so will I do.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16**

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R. (cf. 2a) **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praise to your name, Most High,  
To proclaim your kindness at dawn  
and your faithfulness throughout the night.

R. **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

The just one shall flourish like the palm tree,  
like a cedar of Lebanon shall he grow.  
They that are planted in the house of the LORD  
shall flourish in the courts of our God.

R. **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

They shall bear fruit even in old age;  
vigorous and sturdy shall they be,  
Declaring how just is the LORD,  
my rock, in whom there is no wrong.

R. **Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.**

**Reading 2 2 Cor 5:6-10**

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Brothers and sisters:  
We are always courageous,  
although we know that while we are at home in the body  
we are away from the Lord,  
for we walk by faith, not by sight.  
Yet we are courageous,  
and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord.  
Therefore, we aspire to please him,

whether we are at home or away.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,  
so that each may receive recompense,  
according to what he did in the body, whether good or evil.

**Gospel Mk 4:26-34**

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Jesus said to the crowds:

"This is how it is with the kingdom of God;  
it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land  
and would sleep and rise night and day  
and through it all the seed would sprout and grow,  
he knows not how.

Of its own accord the land yields fruit,  
first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.  
And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once,  
for the harvest has come."

He said,

"To what shall we compare the kingdom of God,  
or what parable can we use for it?

It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground,  
is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth.

But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants  
and puts forth large branches,

so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade."

With many such parables

he spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it.

Without parables he did not speak to them,

but to his own disciples he explained everything in private.