

SUNDAY READINGS

Ezekiel 17:22-24

²² Thus says the Lord GOD:

I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar;

I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain.

²³ On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar.

Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind.

²⁴ All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD.

I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree;

I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.

Second Corinthians 5:6-10,14-17

⁶ So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord— ⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹⁴For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. ¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. ¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Mark 4:26-34

The Parable of the Growing Seed

26 He also said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³⁰ He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

The Use of Parables

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in