

11th Sunday Ordinary Time—Father's Day weekend—Deacon Jim

This weekend, the scriptures are based on an agricultural theme. There are several times that Jesus used agricultural themes as most of Jesus' listeners would have been farmers themselves or, at least, very familiar with farming.

Jesus speaks about seeds and how important it is to plant them and then have the faith in which they should grow. He uses the symbolism of one of the smallest of seeds, the mustard seed, that grows into a very large plant. This is not just done on its own accord; however, it takes the grace of God and the nurturing of the farmer to see this through from a little seed to a yielding plant.

I think that we can also see this as a reflection in our lives. Since it is Father's Day weekend, I would like to focus in on the fathers in my comparison.

In the book, *Man to Man, Dad to Dad*, there is a chapter called "*Superdad, More than an Action Figure*" written by Bill Donaghy. He writes that in each man, there is a superhero destined for greatness. I guess you could refer to that as a seed planted in each man. Bill writes, "Underneath the seemingly mundane surface, there is more. (One again just like a seed under the ground).

He continues that "A man's superpowers are there. They grow steady and strong in the secret chambers of a man's heart, often waiting to be unlocked. He said that the seed of greatness is there, ready to be a light to the family, to love and to protect no matter what the circumstances."

I would like to suggest that the secret to unlocking those superpowers, lies within God's grace and nurturing love in the Sacraments of the church. If we are open to God's graces (in plant terms—watering) we will begin to grow and immerge into the men that God himself destined us to be.

So many times, in our society, however, a man's growth is stymied through sin. We can think of the setbacks sometimes as the kryptonite in our lives as a superhero.

But Bill Donaghy writes, "So long as we stick to the healing rays of God's that strengthen us, the kryptonite of sin cannot overcome our hearts. Like Superman gaining strength from the light of the sun, our strength flows from the Son of God. I need the ritual of prayer, the light of Christ's rays beaming from the Eucharist to make me a better man.

Our way to God the Father is always shown to us first through our earthly fathers. My dad was not always perfect and would be clumsy at times, as I sometimes am today. But through his cooperation with grace, he grew stronger. I can still see him in the wee hours of the night kneeling before the little statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the living room. He made visits to the Blessed Sacrament and he also fasted."

We as men need to open ourselves up to the grace of God and step forward and grow into the greatness that we were created for. Not men who cower in the face of adversity and moral and spiritual challenges, but warriors and protectors that God made us to be.

This weekend the Knights of Columbus will be handing out keychains for the fathers/grandfathers in our parish and on it is a shield that states Man of God. You are all destined to be men of God, and this keychain can serve as a reminder of what you were created to be.

In the *Miracle on Ice*, Coach Herb Brooks addressed the USA Hockey Team prior to their game against the Soviet Union. He said, "Great Moments are born of Great Opportunity"—and then he said, "This Is Our Time".

Men of God this is our opportunity to grow into what God created us for. This is our time!

Happy Father's Day

Deacon Jim