

Have you ever seen a disco ball? It spins around reflecting light into dark places, usually on a dance floor. It is made up of many small mirrors. The mirrors were reflecting light from a beam to every corner of the room. Every once in a while one beam would strike you directly in the eye and catch your attention.

For me, the Bible is like a disco ball. Every once in a while one scripture passage beams into our hearts and lightens up our day.

One example of it are Jesus' words from John 3: 16

"God so loved the world that he gave us his only begotten son, that all who believe in him might have eternal life." Another one is from John 10:10. "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full."

For me, I find that the parables of Jesus are like the light reflecting from a disco ball. Parables are especially bright and powerful reflections of the glory of God.

They reveal to us insight into the very reign of God in our lives.

Jesus' parables are about all kinds of things, barren fig trees, making bread, finding a buried treasure, buying a pearl of great price. The all give us insight into the reign of God.

There are, however, four very special parables of Jesus; They are parables are about seeds. They tell us about growth in the kingdom of God. Can you name the four parables with the mention of seeds?
(Get the congregation to name them and then expand on them)

- Sower goes out to sow his seed, which falls on different kinds of ground
- Seed and weeds grow together
- Mustard seed: Smallest, yet largest, birds of the air
- Seed grows secretly

Let us focus today on just one parable, the parable of the seed that grows secretly.

- It is found only in Mark's Gospel 4:26-30: "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 a sickle at once for the harvest has come."

There three phases to farming (tell about time on the farm in Canada)

- **1 prepare the soil (manure) and then plant the seed (long hours of work)**
- **Wait and wait and wait. There is no work at all to be done; it is all out of our hands. You have to trust in God to be a farmer.**
 - **In our science-centered world, we may have found out exactly HOW and WHY the seed grows.**
 - **We may know how to genetically alter the seed.**
 - **But the miracle of growth still goes on and pushes to fulfillment. It has been for millions of years. And so has the kingdom of God.**
 - **All we need to do is trust, hope and believe.**

The parable tells us of spiritual qualities we need to nurture if we want the reign of God to come into our hearts.

- **Harvest: Only then will come the harvest.**

We Americans are very good at the first stage of farming, of preparing the soil and planting, of working hard and being goal-centered and expecting results.

But We are NOT very good at waiting, at trusting, at hoping and believing.

I would like to share with you a quote from a homily given by Cardinal Dearden back in 1979, and was .actually written for him by Bishop Ken Untener. Please follow along with me on your cards

It helps, now and then,

to step back and take the long view,

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,

it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime

only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise

that is God's' work.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted.

knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay the foundations that will need further development.

We cannot do everything

and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something,

And do it very well.

It may be incomplete,

but it is a beginning,

a step along the way.

an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen PAUSE

We need to put into practice the word of Cardinal Dearden which flow from today's parable about the seed growing secretly

- With our children, especially when they become teens and young adults (expand)**
- Within the Church (tell the story about the blessed mother sandcasting which I brought to the parish in 1988.)**
- In our neighborhood (people say it will take 50 years to rebuild the community)**

I have a special word for the young adults, (especially those graduating). You are still very much in the planting and sewing seed of your life

- **Finishing school**
- **Beginning careers**
- **Getting married and having children.**

Tosdy's parable about waiting on the Lord may not seem to have much to say to you. But no matter how talented you are, no matter how well you are matched with friends and contacts and a spouse, no matter how many opportunities you get in the our career, there is a need to be humble. For all we have, even with our utmost efforts, is all gift. Humbly thank God each day and pray that what you really need will be given to you.

As we congratulate you today, do not forget to trust the words of Jesus.

"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 a sickle at once for the harvest has come."

Yes, my brothers and sisters, this is how it is with the kingdom of God.

The Power of One

“Prophets of a Future Not Our Own”

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to step back and take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime
only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise
that is God’s work.

Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church’s mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

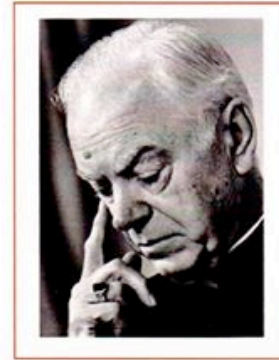
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John Francis Dearden
1907—1988

*(Written for Cardinal Dearden by then-Father Ken Untener on the occasion of
the Mass for Deceased Priests, October 25, 1979)*

*Excerpts selected and edited by Judy M. Holmes from resources of the Cardinal Dearden Legacy Project,
a compilation of the wisdom of this extraordinary leader and assessments of his legacy. Look for its publication in the near future.
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