

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY - A - JULY 23, 2017**

**FOR THE BEGINNING OF TODAY'S HOMILY YOU ARE GOING TO NEED A  
HEALTHY DOSE OF HISTORICAL IMAGINATION...**

**THE YEAR IS 1797 - YOU ARE IN FRANCE - 1797 - ONLY 220 YEARS AGO ----  
YOU ARE IN PARIS - GOT THAT? A YOUNG 28 YR. OLD COMMANDER OF  
THE FRENCH ARMY IS RETURNING TO PARIS AS A HERO FROM VICTORIES  
IN ITALY AND AUSTRIA WITH DREAMS OF BECOMING THE EMPEROR OF  
FRANCE AND OF THE KNOWN WORLD....**

**HE IS DREAMING OF THE WHOLE WORLD BECOMING HIS KINGDOM -  
HIS NAME, OF COURSE, IS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**

**OK? LET'S SWITCH A LITTLE NOW - YOU ARE NOW IN BORDEAUX,  
FRANCE - STILL - 1797 - NOT THAT FAR AWAY FROM PARIS - THERE IS A  
RATHER OBSCURE 36 YR OLD PRIEST THERE WHO IS BEING EXILED FROM  
HIS BELOVED BORDEAUX, FRANCE TO SARAGOSSA, SPAIN -**

**HE IS BEING EXILED BECAUSE HE IS DETERMINED TO CLING TO HIS  
DREAM - A DREAM OF SPREADING A DIFFERENT KIND OF KINGDOM -  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD - IN MARY'S NAME**

**BOTH YOUNG MEN HAVE A DREAM.....**

**THE ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT DREAMS**

**AND NEITHER MAN GAVE UP ON THEIR DREAMS....**

**TODAY'S GOSPEL IS ABOUT HAVING DREAMS - AS ROGER VARBAN,  
PASTOR IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS WRITES IN HIS COMMENTARY ON OUR  
READINGS TODAY**

*HE GOES ON: THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING THE FAITH OF JESUS THAN HAVING FAITH IN JESUS...*

*FOR ROGER "THAT'S A WHOLE NEW FAITH BALLGAME"*

*JESUS' FAITH IS UNIQUE - IT REVOLVES AROUND TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD BY GIVING OURSELVES FOR OTHERS - THAT IS JESUS' DREAM IF WE REFUSE TO MAKE HIS DREAM OUR DREAM, WE'RE DESTINED TO ONE DAY LEAVE THE WORLD AS WE FOUND IT*

*NOTHING WILL HAVE CHANGED FOR THE BETTER BECAUSE WE WERE PART OF THIS WORLD*

*JESUS' DREAM FOR OUR WORLD, OF COURSE, IS REPRESENTED TODAY AS A MUSTARD SEED, AND AS YEAST IN THE DOUGH...*

*ROGER VARBAN GOES ON TO SAY THAT "THE MAIN PROBLEM DREAMERS ENCOUNTER IS TIME"*

*TIME HAS A WAY OF WHITTILING AWAY AT OUR HOPE AND PLANS FOR A BETTER WORLD...OUR DREAMS*

*THINGS NEVER TURN OUT THE WAY WE EXPECT...*

*EVENTUALLY IT'S A LOT EASIER TO "SELL OUT" OUR DREAMS AND JUST GO ALONG AND GET ALONG - AS WE SAY.*

*I'M SURE I'VE DONE THAT IT MY LIFE AFTER PROFESSING FINAL VOWS AS A MARIANIST IN POST-VATICAN II 1967.....AUGUST 13TH*

*AS A PROFESSED MARIANIST I HAD DREAMS GENERATED BY THE DREAMS OF VATICAN II -*

*THAT WAS TRUE FOR MY GENERATION OF MARIANISTS....*

*WE ENVISIONED A CHURCH AND A SOCIETY OF MARY QUITE DIFFERENT*

*FROM THE ONE IN WHICH WE GREW UP*

*ALONG THE WAY, I'M SURE THAT I HAVE SOLD OUT AT TIMES*

*I'VE HAD TO READJUST TO REALITY .....*

*A NUMBER OF MY COLLEAGUES MADE OTHER CHOICES TO REALIZE*

*THEIR DREAMS....*

*I'VE HAD TO COME UP AGAINST MY OWN INADEQUACIES, MY OWN*

*SINFULNESS, MY OWN LIMITATIONS*

*PERHAPS THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS MATTHEW GIVES US THREE*

*PARABLES ABOUT PATIENCE IN TODAY'S GOSPEL....*

*ECHOING OUR FIRST READING'S CALL FOR HOPE, MATTHEW IS*

*CONVINCED WE CHRISTIANS ARE ALWAYS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL*

*WITH WEEDS IN OUR FIELDS....*

*WE'E NEVER GOING TO BE WORKING IN IDEAL SITUATIONS OR RELATING*

*TO IDEAL PEOPLE....*

*NO MATTER HOW IMPERFECT OUR DAY AND AGE IS, WE ARE ALWAYS*

*CALLED TO BUILD COMMUNITY -*

*RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR GOD AND OTHERS*

*FOLLOWING PAUL'S ADVICE TO THE COMMUNITY IN ROME IN OUR*

*SECOND READING, WE HAVE TO LEARN TO ACCEPT OUR OWN*

*WEAKNESSES....*

*CONFIDENT THAT GOD'S SPIRIT ALWAYS KNOWS WHO WE ACTUALLY ARE*

***JESUS' DREAM MIGHT BE AS SMALL AS A MUSTARD SEED OR A BIT OF YEAST.....***

***BUT IT IS MIGHTY....***

***AND WEAK AS WE ARE, WE CANNOT ABANDON OUR DREAM - NO MATTER WHAT, NO MATTER OUR AGE....***

***OUR DREAM MIGHT BE LIMITED TO PAYING ATTENTION TO AND IMPROVING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR CAREGIVER - IF WE ARE INCAPACITATED ...***

***I REMEMBER THAT AS MY SITUATION IN THOSE DAYS WHEN I WAS RECOVERING FROM MY HEART ATTACK AND SURGERY....***

***WE MUST CLING AS CHRISTIANS TO JESUS' DREAM OF TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD BY GIVING OURSELVES FOR OTHERS....***

***IF WE DON'T, THE NEXT GENERATION WILL HAVE TO WAIT EVEN LONGER FOR OUR WORLD TO CHANGE....***

***AS I MENTIONED, NAPOLEON AND WILLIAM JOSEPH CHAMINADE DID NOT ABANDON THEIR DREAMS...***

***I THINK AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE FOR NAPOLEON'S DREAM BEING ONE OF SELF AGGRANDIZEMENT, SELF PROMOTION***

***IT HAS NOT STOOD THE TEST OF TIME, IT HAS NOT CONTINUED TO BEAR MUCH FRUIT - UNLESS YOU INCLUDE THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE IN IT***

***ON THE OTHER HAND, CHAMINADE'S DREAM WAS AN ATTEMPT IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY TO LIVE OUT JESUS DREAM OF TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD BY GIVING OURSELVES FOR OTHERS....***

***THAT DREAM AND ITS INCREDIBLE IMPACT EVEN TODAY ARE  
UNDENIABLE***

***MORE THAN 200 YEARS LATER...***

***HIS DREAM INCLUDES A FAMILY OF RELIGIOUS MEN, WOMEN AND LAY  
INDIVIDUALS IN 5 CONTINENTS, NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA,  
EUROPE, AFRICA AND AUSTRALIA...***

***THE MUSTARD SEED CONTINUES TO GROW ....***

***THE YEAST CONTINUES TO EXPAND....***

***EACH OF US MUST CONTINUE TO DREAM OUR DREAM - AS CHRISTIANS  
IT MUST INCLUDE TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD BY GIVING OURSELVES  
FOR OTHERS....***

***LET US PRAY THAT OUR WHEAT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW EVEN IN THE  
MIDST OF OUR WEEDS...***

***LET US PRAY THAT OUR MUSTARD SEED WILL CONTINUE TO GROW  
AND OUR YEAST WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND AND FLOURISH...***

***YOU NEVER KNOW THE INCREDIBLE IMPACT IT MAY EVENTUALLY HAVE  
ON OUR WORLD AND FUTURE GENERATIONS***