

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

30th January 2026

First reading

2 Samuel 11:1-4a, 5-10a, 13-17

'You have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and enquired about the woman. And one said, 'Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, 'I am pregnant.'

So David sent word to Joab, 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, 'Go down to your house and wash your feet.' And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told David, 'Uriah did not go down to his house', David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, 'Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die.' And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 51(50):3-4. 5-6b. 6c-7. 10-11. R cf. 3a

Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your merciful love;

according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

My transgressions, truly I know them; my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done.

So you are just in your sentence, without reproach in your judgement.

Behold, in guilt I was born, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Let me hear rejoicing and gladness, that the bones you have crushed may exult.

Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my guilt.

Gospel Acclamation

Cf. Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.

Alleluia.

Gospel**Mark 4:26-34**

'The smallest of all the seeds on earth becomes larger than all the garden plants.'

At that time: Jesus said to the crowd: 'The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.'

And he said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Short reflection on the reading for today

Sometimes our best efforts seem to bear very little fruit. We can get into a gloomy frame of mind and feel that we have precious little to show for our lives so far. However, we might be doing more good than we realize. Jesus taught that even a little can go a long way. The little efforts we make to do some good may be fruitful after all. That seems to be the message of the two parables in today's gospel.

The mustard seed is tiny and yet it grows into a very large shrub. What looks so insignificant takes on a life of its own, out of proportion to its small beginning. The pinch of yeast that a woman mixes into a batch of dough affects the whole batch. Again, the little good we do be worthwhile in ways that would surprise us. That is what the kingdom of God is like, Jesus says. What is small and seemingly insignificant can become beneficial for many.