



The Franciscan Sisters of Christ the King

1409 E. Meyer Blvd. Kansas City, MO 64131

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Having heard a sermon and a conference that addressed the mustard seed, we decided to find out what the plant really does look like. Have you ever wondered why Our Lord chose mustard over other possibilities?

The scripture reads as follows: *The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up it is greater than all herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in its branches.* Matt. 13:31-32 (see also Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19)

Historians, spiritual writers, and lovers of herbs state that mustard grew all over Palestine at the time of Our Lord, including areas close to the Jordan river. At that time, it is said, certain types of mustard could grow as high as 12 feet or more. Those types of plants do not seem to exist now, but the mustard of today does still grow very quickly to maturity. Then, as now, the mustard plant had a cruciform shape, which one can see in the plants shown above, the family classification being *Cruciferae*.

Mustard plants come in several varieties. White mustard and J-mustard are used more for their leaves. The seed of the white mustard is small, round, and yellow, and possesses a sweeter flavor than that of another variety, black mustard. White mustard is used most often to make the condiment, while black mustard is more often used for medicinal and other purposes, having been used as a salve to treat arthritis. Black mustard, with its darker brown seeds, grows taller and is probably the type of mustard plant Our Lord is referring to in the Gospel. The mustard seed must be crushed and mixed with water or wine vinegar to bring out the pungent taste, reminding us of the crushing of

grapes to make wine for the Mass.

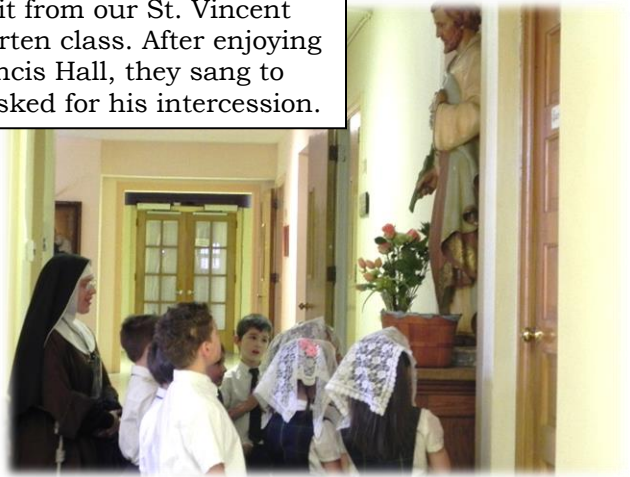
The mustard seed, at first glance, does not really look very small, being 2-3 mm in diameter. However, many writers point out that it is the smallest of similar plants. As mentioned, it does grow quickly, and goldfinches (the birds of the air) especially enjoy eating the seeds. Due to the amount of oil in the seed, it can survive many years of dormancy.

The metaphor of the humble seed crushed to put out a mighty flavor or to be used as a salve is applied to the Church and the spread of the Gospel. The beginnings of the Church were humble. However, though tiny, the Church was mighty. Our Lord, it is said, did not choose a useless weed or a stunningly beautiful but completely impractical plant for the parable. Instead, He chose mustard, which in its simplicity serves mankind. The members of the Church are crushed like grapes or mustard seeds in their service to God and neighbor. The ability of the seed to survive dormancy is also significant, especially in these times!



May the mustard seed of the Church come out of dormancy, spring up quickly, feed the birds of all nations, and cure souls!

We received a visit from our St. Vincent de Paul Kindergarten class. After enjoying a treat in St. Francis Hall, they sang to St. Joseph and asked for his intercession.



The second graders with Sr. Frances Marie put on a "Redemption Play," written mostly by themselves. They took us through Old Testament prefigures of Our Lord (David slaying Goliath) to the crucifixion and resurrection.



Father Trummer asked Sr. Mary Elizabeth Rose to guide the High School girls in painting Latin quotes throughout the Tracy Campus of St. Vincent de Paul Academy.



We are helping out with First Holy Communion days of recollection in Kansas City, MO, Ridgefield, CT, Mukwanago, WI, St. Louis, MO, and Sanger, TX.



The St. Vincent de Paul kindergartners put on a display of their art and answered questions from visitors.



*For, amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible to you.
(Matthew 17:19)*

Is it this clamp? Or that clamp?
(Assembling shelves for the kitchen)



The St. Vincent de Paul High School girls spent the night at the convent for conferences and activities.



Holy Mass and our ceremony are on August 2nd at 9 am. There will be taking of the habit and renovations of vows. Visitors are welcome to return to see the Sisters from 1pm to 4pm.

Thank you to the students from Bishop Miege High School, who helped us with several projects.



We were privileged to receive Bishop Tissier de Mallerai, who said Mass and gave a conference at the convent on May 27th. For those who may not know, it was Bishop Tissier de Mallerai who, as a seminarian, sought out Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre with a handful of confreres and asked him to start a traditional seminary. The Archbishop saw the hand of Providence in the request and agreed. They began in Switzerland with the approval of the local bishop. In a conference, His Excellency recounted for us those early days of his seminary life with the Archbishop, as well as the historic events that led up to the founding of the Society of St. Pius X. We are very grateful to His Excellency for time spent with us, as well as for his example of fortitude.



Chino is doing his best to be distracting.

Can you help?



The contractor doing the bulk of the work on the transept tower will have completed the project by the time this letter gets mailed. Providentially, he has some time in his schedule right now, but we raised barely enough money to enable him to make a short "test" of how long it will take to restore the 300+ remaining convent windows. We expect the number to be staggering, but we have confidence that he will complete the job properly. His is a family business with solid values and three generations working together. Could you help us keep them on the job? If you do not have financial means, please pray for success!



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