

As I get older- and I'll be reaching the grand old age of 60 this year- and so naturally as I look back on my life, I'm more and more amazed at how blessed I have been all throughout my life. Not that I didn't have my share of troubles just like everybody else, but I have been able to do so many wonderful things- things that a painfully shy, extremely introverted, awkward, stuttering son of poor Sicilian immigrants should have no right to experience. And I have been able to learn so much and to have known so many great people- people who have done so much for me and who I was able to do so much for as well.

It's all too much...

And at the same time, I look back on all the mistakes I made- all the poor judgment and rash decisions and sloppy and half-hearted work and just plain ineptitude- and I marvel at how all this came together into this blessed life I have been able to live.

Only now that I am a man of faith- as weak as that faith so often is- only now do I appreciate how the Lord got me to where I am and how He is leading me to where I am going. I see very well now that the Lord can take the little that I was able to do and make something good come out of it.

And of course I got in the way of these good things coming into being, but God was always patient and kept at it and allowed that little bit of goodness I was able to provide to now thrive and give glory to Him and to His name.

Through it all the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how.

Today's Gospel reminds us that the Kingdom of God is not something we really have a handle on, at least not yet. This new world of peace and justice and all good things- basically the world as God wants it to be- is coming into being all around us, but it's not just business as usual.

God is at work here so you can expect the fullness of this Kingdom of God to be a surprise to us, a mystery that we trust is coming into being even if we don't always see things changing for the better. It's also a reality that accommodates weakness and failure and changes all that into a sense of hope in what God can do and a sense that we have the power of God within us to help us to do whatever we need to do.

Because the seed doesn't come to fruition all by itself. The farmer did their work in planting the seed and doing what needed to be done to nurture it, but there was so much more going on behind the scenes, so to speak. The hidden presence of God in creation and in the natural order, and in history and in our lives, enables things to happen that we don't even pay attention to- a loving and empowering and saving presence that brings things forward to what they are supposed to be. Just like the person who loved you unconditionally and totally, just for you being the person you are, and that sense of being loved made us do things we never thought we could do.

Not that we're totally passive in all this or have no say in the matter- we have free will and we're responsible for what we do and so our choices have an impact on what is happening around us. But God being God- a Spirit of hope and positivity and new life- works with us to get to where we should be- never stuck in one way of being with us and never giving up on us.

And when we have a good reason for doing what we are doing- meaning when the things we are trying to accomplish are for the good of ourselves and for the people we know and love and for the world around us, then we can count on God helping us do what we need to do, even if we don't ever realize it.

And even if we don't even feel like we're actually accomplishing anything, or if we don't feel like we're getting to where we should be, that's OK- the story is not over yet.

This is from the great theologian Fr. Teilhard de Chardin:

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are all, quite naturally,
impatient in everything to reach the end
without delay.

We should like to skip
the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being
on the way to something unknown,
something new,
and yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability-
and that it may take a very long time.

Give our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you
and accept the anxiety of
feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.