

About the Readings on 6.16.24

Sunday, June 12–18

We discover the gospel as Mark told it, hidden today in several parables, hidden always in the cross, and in our gathering hidden in the bread and wine.

Ezekiel 17:22-24

The allegory in Ezekiel is chosen to illumine Mark's use of the image of the tree that houses all the birds of the air. Like Mark, Ezekiel trusts that God will surprise the world by reversing the expected order of things. Christians see the sprig of the cedar to be Christ on the cross.

The Psalm for the Day

In response to the ancient poem about the tree of life, we sing [Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15](#). Our praise to God likens those who thrive in God's house to palm trees, which were often used in religious art in ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian temples, and to the mighty cedars of Lebanon, which grew to be 130 feet high.

2 Corinthians 5:6-10 [11-13] 14-17

Christians have developed each of Paul's hints about human destiny by means of the belief in the immortality of the soul, the final judgment, and the death and resurrection of Christ as the transformative power of God in the present. Christians have proposed a variety of ways that these religious ideas cohere.

Mark 4:26-34

With the mustard seed parable, Mark is not presenting the stereotypical image of the small-become-great. Rather, in the cross and resurrection of Christ, what looks to the world like an annual bush, grown only for flavoring, is actually recognized by believers as the cosmic tree of life. The church itself cannot explain the growth of the seed: the mystery lies in the power of God.