

June 17, 2018 11th Sunday in ordinary time. Father's Day

This lady walked up to a gentleman and asked, "do you own a black pit bull dog? The man said, "Yes." The lady said, "I have to tell you it's dead." The man demanded, "what do you mean it's dead, what happened?" The lady said, "my tiny Pekingese killed it." The man said "your Pekingese killed it, how?" She said, "it got stuck in his throat."

In 1812, 3year old Luis Braille, had an accident in his father's shop that left him totally blind. When Luis got older he enrolled in the school for the blind in Paris. At that time, they were reading books by feeling the raised normal letters that everybody else used, slow process. It took 15 minutes to read just one paragraph. One day a retired French army officer, Charles Barbier, gave the children a demonstration in what we call night writing. It's a system of writing that the French military had invented, to be able to send coded messages back-and-forth in the battlefield at night. The system involved punching a series of holes in paper according to patterns and these patterns could be read by running your fingers over the patterns. The process took up a lot of space and only the simplest messages could be sent. But it was a way to communicate at night before flashlights were invented. Young Louis Braille was very fascinated by this system, he was convinced it could be used to help the blind read better and faster. He went to work simplifying system. He improved it by making it not punched holes but raised dots. The system caught on and spread across the world and today we call it the braille system. In America, because of the American Disability Act, all signs have braille on them. The ones outside of these doors, the restrooms there's braille on them, you see it all over the place. The interesting thing about it is that it didn't become widespread around the world until after his death. When he died the newspapers didn't even carry an obituary. This story underscores three things that need underscoring in today's world. The first is the same thing that our scriptures are talking about today. It's about God making small trees big, big tree small, making dead trees grow, on and on. Jesus uses three parables about seeds and what they can become. So just as the greatest trees in the forest come from the tiny seeds so the greatest movements in our world often come out of the tiniest beginnings. Luis' tiny idea grew into a great movement that revolutionized the world of the blind. The second thing about the story is that people who begin a great movement are often tiny and insignificant themselves. For example, compared to the scholars of his day, Luis was insignificant and tiny yet it was he who came up with the idea of braille. We also see that one individual changes the system. One individual changes the world, not a committee. Jesus was one person, he left it to a committee, we see what happened later on. The third thing is, the people who begin great movement often don't live to see it. In fact, it's interesting corollary in the church that once the pastor leaves, vocations will start to come out of the parish. He motivated them while he was there. Also it takes the seventh son of the seventh son to be a great bagpipe player. You didn't know that did you. So braille is not developed into a worldwide movement until Louis died. We see this all over the place. So three or four points from the story: first, great movements come from the tiny seeds. Jesus said in the gospel, "It's like a mustard seed, the tiniest of seeds sown in the ground becomes a big plant." Second, it illustrates that people who begin a great movement are often tiny and insignificant themselves. If you want to look at another place, look at the apparitions of our Blessed Mother. She does not appear to powerful, rich, important people, she appears to tiny insignificant people as the world sees them. Saint Paul in Corinthian's says, "God purposefully chose who the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful. He chose what the world looks down on, it despises and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. And finally the story of Luis illustrates that people who begin great movement often die before receiving any credit for the movement they started. This is something that happens often. This guy up here on the cross (pointing to the crucifix), He started a movement but what happened? He died before it got big. And we have other people, Susan B Anthony died before her movement for women's rights gained a lot of speed and

changed the constitution. Martin Luther King died when civil rights was a tiny little seed, before we once again saw changing of the Constitution. We have a practical message from the scripture and from Luis's story. No seed is too tiny for God to make a big tree out of it. This means that if we think anything we can do to change peoples' attitudes towards the destruction of human life is too tiny to make a difference we haven't paid attention to the scriptures today. We think that anything we can do to change peoples' attitudes toward the destruction of the planet is too tiny to make a difference, we didn't pay attention to the Scriptures. Do we think anything we can do to spread the message of God's good news on this earth is too insignificant, we didn't pay attention to the Scriptures. All we have to do is try and with Gods help it can grow. The message today that Jesus wishes to teach us, the great message we celebrate in the liturgy, no seed is too small to grow into a big tree and no Pekingese is too small to kill a pit bull. And you were wondering what the joke had to do with the Homily.

God bless you