

she managed to keep her commitment to 'no more drugs'. It is a long road for everyone, but the evangelical love we try to have between the two of us – even though there are times when we are reduced to tears – gives us the strength to love our son in this delicate situation. A love that perhaps also helps him understand how to love his wife.'

*Edited by Letizia Magri and
the Word of Life team*

¹ C. Lubich, *Word of Life*, August 1983.

² C. Lubich, *Word of Life*, October 1979.

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Mark 4: 26-27

This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

Mark's Gospel wants to share the good news of Jesus' message and the kingdom of God lies at its very heart. Here it is described in a short parable by likening it to the image of a seed that once cast into the earth releases its life force and bears fruit.

But what is the kingdom of God for us today? What does it have in common with our personal and collective history and the constant sense we may have of feeling suspended between expectation and disappointment? If it has already been sown, why do we not see its fruits of peace, security and happiness?

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This Word conveys to us Jesus' own total confidence in God's plan for humanity: 'Since Jesus came into the world and was victorious over it, this kingdom is already present here on earth and its fulfilment at the end of history is already assured. The Church is the community of those who believe in this kingdom and is its foundation.'¹

To all who welcome her, she entrusts the task of preparing the ground to receive God's gift and cherish hope in his love.

'For there is no human effort, no exercise in self-denial, no intellectual study or research that will give you the right to enter the kingdom of God. It is God himself who comes to meet you, who reveals himself with his light and who touches you with his grace. And there is no merit you can boast of or rely upon that will entitle you to such a gift from God. The kingdom is freely offered to you.'²

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and grows, though he does not know how.

The parable speaks of scattering the seed, in other words, not holding onto it but confidently sowing it over a large area. 'By night or by day': the kingdom grows silently, even in the darkness of night. We can also ask every day, 'Thy kingdom come.' The farmer does not need to constantly control the seed but needs to wait patiently for nature to take its course.

This word of life directs us towards trust in the power of love which will bear fruit in its own time. It teaches us the art of patiently accompanying what can grow of its own accord, without anxiety about results; it sets us free to welcome the other person in the present moment, valuing his or her potential while respecting his or her time.

'A month before the wedding, our son phoned us in a state of alarm because his girlfriend had started using drugs again. He asked for advice about what to do. It wasn't easy to know what to say. We could have taken advantage of the situation and persuaded him to leave her but that didn't seem right. So we suggested he listened to what his heart was saying... A long silence followed, then he said, "I think I can love a little more." After the wedding they managed to find an excellent rehabilitation centre with outpatient support. Fourteen long months passed during which