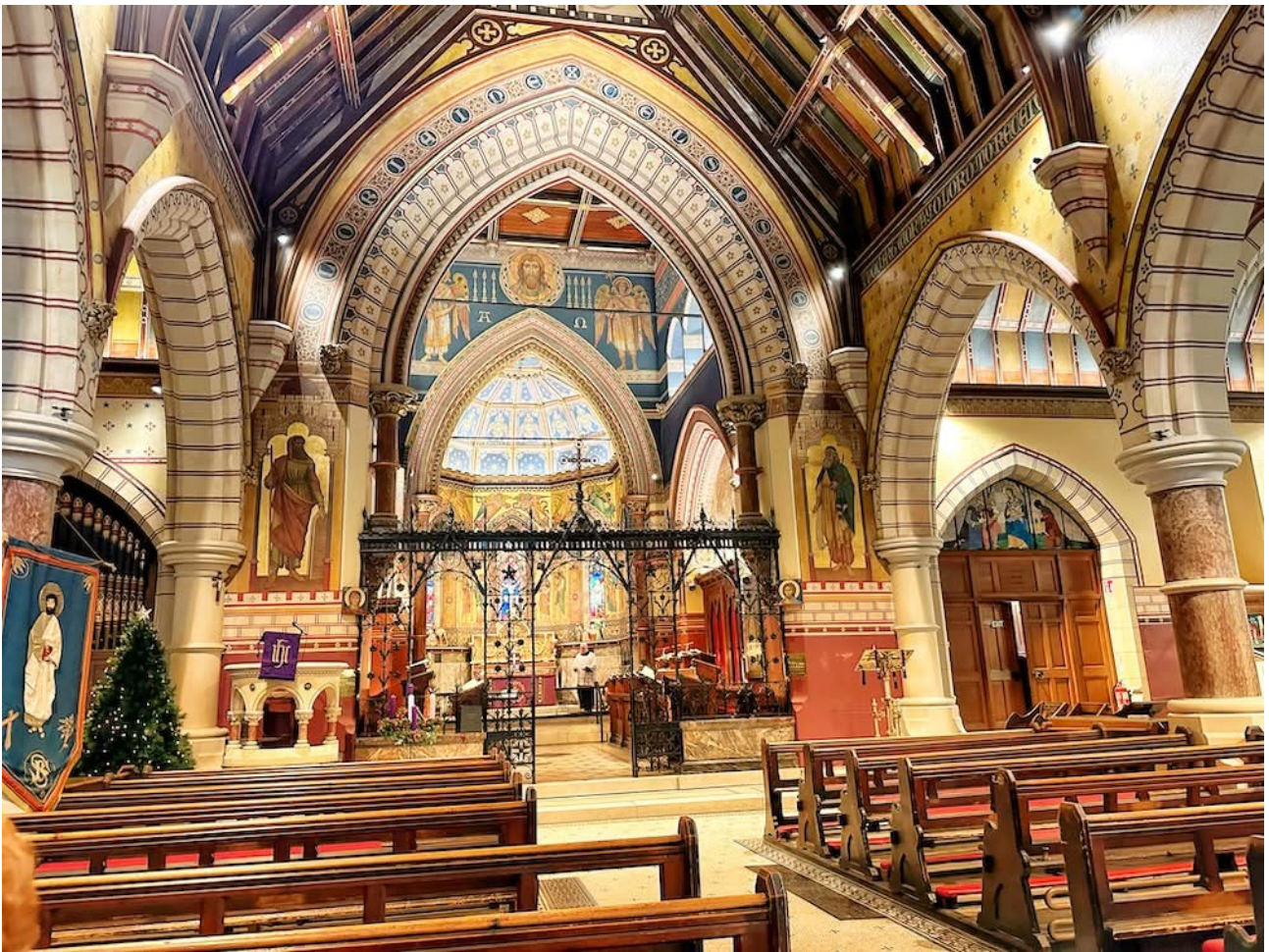


Speaking to the soul



A mustard seed

Then Jesus said, “What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? It is like a tiny mustard seed that a man planted in a garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds make nests in its branches. Luke 13:18-19

A mustard seed is tiny – between one and two millimetres. You would hardly notice it because it so small, but it can grow into a huge plant, commonly more than two metres tall and sometimes even up to four metres. It's understandable that Jesus described it as a tree. Inevitably, a mustard plant attracts huge attention from birds, who love to feed on the little black seeds.

Jesus' point is clear. When we see God at work in the world, it may not look impressive. It may be overlooked because it appears so small, but the kingdom of God is always in the growth business, so even though it might seem tiny, it will keep growing. In many parts of the world, the Church is small and struggling. I've visited many towns and even cities where there is only one Christian or just a small group. I've always been incredibly impressed when I've met such people. In human terms, their situation has looked impossibly challenging, but they've had faith that God can grow his kingdom against all odds.

We live in a world that is impressed by size and success, and it is easy for churches to be sucked into this kind of thinking. There is nothing wrong with either size or success, but we must never forget that we serve a God who does miracles. There are many churches and Christian organisations in this country that are, on the face of it, weak and financially insecure. They are not outwardly impressive, but we need to hold on to the fact that we worship a God who brings growth and blessing in phenomenal ways. The one thing we must never do is look down on things just because they are small.

QUESTION

What church, Christian organisation or initiative are you looking at that seems as small as a mustard seed?

PRAYER

Thank you Lord that you are a God of miracles. Help me to look at every situation with your eyes and to see how you can bring growth in the most unlikely places. Amen

Photo - Parish Church of St Bartholomew, Dublin

