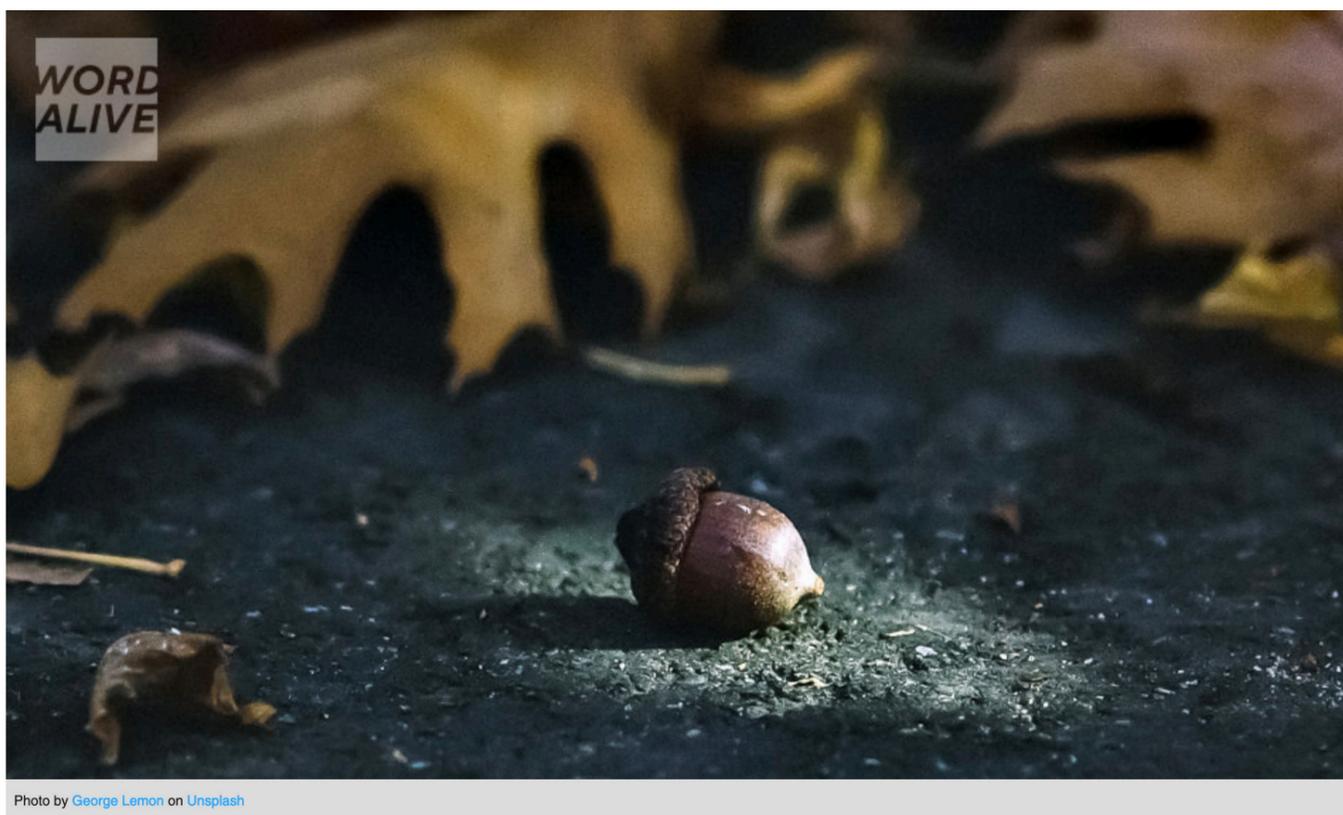


Allowing ourselves to be transformed | Word Alive

Sr. Mumbi Kigutha

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A reflection for the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B by Sr. Mumbi Kigutha

I spend a lot of time researching, musing on, writing, and talking about social injustices, even more so since the pandemic began which resulted in a new global awareness that resulted from our inability to travel, import, export, trade, communicate, etc., revealing in one part our own vulnerability and mortality but on the other hand how interconnected we all are truly are.

However, the global awareness brought to the forefront the weaknesses of our leaders, systems, and structures and our unresolved issues as individuals and societies. We discovered that our successes and privilege and power are directly tied to the oppression and marginalization of others, and with this awakening, many of us desired to spring into action and start fixing things.

However, when confronted with the magnitude of the issues and their intersectionality, many of us began to flounder and despair wondering how one person could possibly make a difference. I have been known to despair in the same way, when challenges seem unsurmountable and when others around you do not seem to have the same enthusiasm to work for change.

The Gospel introduces us to the mustard seed in the context of faith, how a minute speck grows into a mighty tree that can weather all storms but also provide refuge and shelter on its boughs and under its branches.

I doubt that the seed, when planted, is aware of what it takes to transform it to a mighty tree, the interdependence and interconnectedness with the ecosystem, the care by the gardener. However, even if it were aware, it chooses to stay open to the experience, open to change, open to transformation, open to a new identity, and by thus cooperating with others blossoms into a thing of might and beauty due to the graciousness and work of many other elements.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. I believe the first step in any process is awareness, and by golly, hasn't our awareness continued to grow.

Whether through conversations or learning from the various media sources, most of us have access to more information and, thus, education than any time in the history of humankind. Even though the people around you might not seem aware, many kindred spirits inhabit the earth in this blessed time. That awareness and desire to do something is in itself a prayer; that desire to please God by serv-

ing and loving humanity, to do good and then stepping out into action is a step of faith, no matter how shaky, or how tentative. And God promises to take you, your efforts, those gifts and talents, and also your limitations and plant them upon the mountaintop where they shall blossom.

I can hear some of you thinking, "But I have been working at this effort for years, with seemingly no fruits, no recognition, and no growth."

However, remember that we are interconnected, not only across the globe in this present time, but reaching back to time immemorial and far into the future. And thus, we might be the seed, being invited to cooperate with the cosmos and eco-system of dependence on other like-hearted individuals to not only water us, prune us, fertilize us, but that they may also graft on what might seem like our little effort, unrecognized work, underappreciated selves to become a mighty tree, cedar or mustard, that will provide shelter and refuge under its boughs.

Keeping in mind, that though we may be the messengers, the hands, feet, eyes, and ears, whatever we do is God's work, part of a greater perfect plan, unfolding like a seamless garment since the world came into existence, and this should bring us much comfort and strengthen our faith.

The readings for the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, are

Ezekiel 17:22-24

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Mark 4:26-34



Sr. Mumbi Kigutha, a member of the Sisters of the Precious Blood (Ohio), was born and raised in Kenya. Currently, she ministers in Chicago as a part-time international consultant for Jesuit Refugee Services and also as the organizing secretary of the Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network. A prolific writer, she is a regular contributor to the Horizons column of the Global Sisters Report.