

The Grain of Mustard Seed



YOUNG priest was complaining to an old pastor of the apparent failure of all his efforts to quicken the piety and improve the morals of his charge. "Ah, yes, I know you have a great deal to contend with," said the elder man; "but you must not be so easily discouraged. The conditions are about the same I encountered here over forty years ago. I, too, was on the point of despairing, when suddenly the clouds opened, the sun appeared, and gradually things took shape in which you now see them." "And what good shape it is," rejoined the younger priest. "You have the model congregation of the diocese, for its size. We all know that."

The good old priest folded his hands meditatively for a moment then lifted the biretta from his white hairs looking upward answered.

"Thank God, my labors have been singularly blessed! But tell me: do you pray a great deal and with confidence in God's promises? Are you a devout client of His Blessed Mother?"

"Yes, Father," he replied, "I do pray, of course; but latterly, I fear, in great discouragement. My people are utterly indifferent, it seems to me."

So much the more need for constant, persistent, unswerving prayer. We must take heaven by storm. It is only the violent who bear it away. When I came here many years ago, the Catholics of the place were just as you have described your parishioners, utterly indifferent.

"Well, I labored for months without avail. Mass was but slimly attended; the children went to the public school—or district school, as it was then called. I never had more than two or three Communions on Sunday; and so like yourself, I began to grow discouraged. Soon after Christmas I organized a Sunday-school, which was also poorly attended. There were, perhaps, twelve child-

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