

Whenever we serve others or do some charitable act, we usually do it with one of 2 reasons:

- 1) in a spirit of martyrdom (being sacrificial)
- 2) to perfect ourselves in virtue...to be more unselfish, more kind.

These 2 reasons are true and good, but the better reason is to do these (in the words of Caryll Houselander in her book *The Reed of God*) so "that our hands make Christ's hands in our life, that our service may let Christ serve through us, that our patience may bring Christ's patience back to the world."

During the first Advent, Jesus grew in Mary's womb. When we serve, we let Jesus, who is in us, grow in our world. We are that seed, one of Jesus's favorite symbols, when Jesus said in scripture, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed." Our goal as Catholic Christians is to further grow the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.