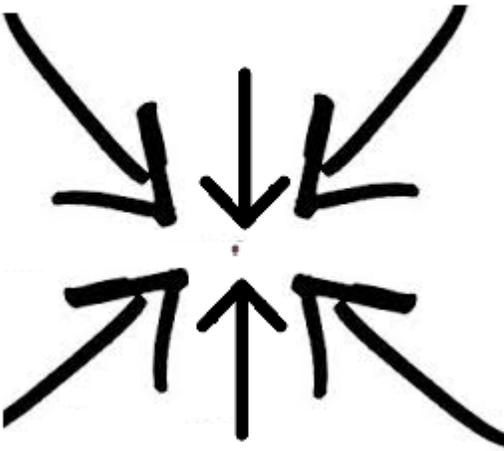




Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

### Mustard Seed Faith

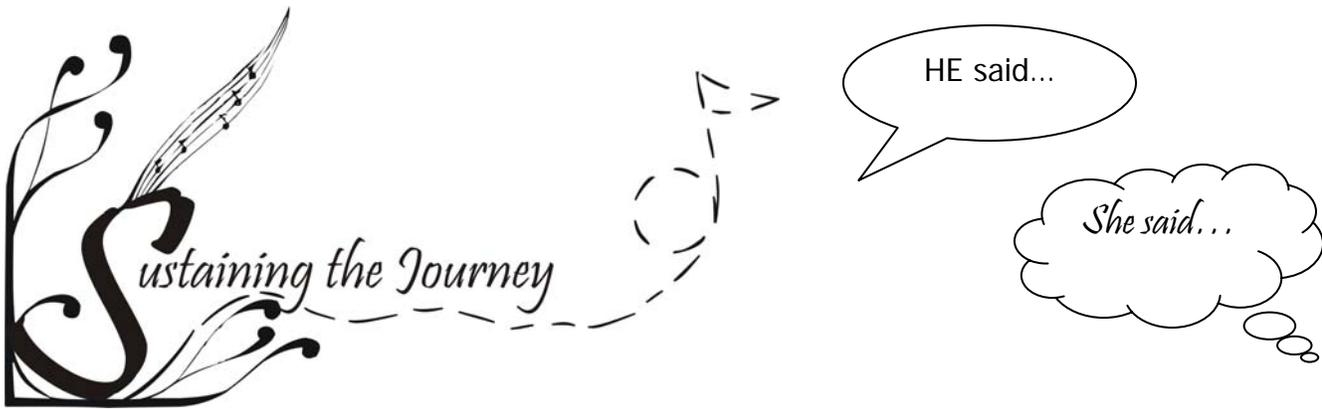
*Bob's perspective:*

<p>This is a Mustard Seed:</p>  <p><i>(It's an actual photo, honest!)</i></p>	<p>This is a Mustard Seed Through the Eyes of Faith:</p> 
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### Any Questions?

I don't have any questions per se, but these images do stir my imagination a bit. My wife Maureen's favorite holiday movie was *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street*...the original 1947 version with Maureen O'Hara and Natalie Wood. While I can take the movie or leave it (I miss my wife, but not the movie all that much!), I must admit that there's a particular quote within it that has always intrigued me: "Faith is believing in something when common sense tells you not to." I'm not sure as to whether or not I agree with that statement. Maybe faith isn't not so much an "either/or" as it is a "both/and" concept.

In my life, I have found many times that a little faith can go a long way. Take for example, my faith in God. I'm not one that necessarily believes that God moves us around life like a chess piece on a



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game board, but I do believe that God watches over us, cares for us, walks with us, and above all – loves us unconditionally. To me, the love of God is common sense – and not at all difficult to believe.

But what about the case where ourselves or a loved one is going through a traumatic life event? Is having faith still a matter of common sense? Going back to my chess board theory, I find it very unlikely that (in general terms) God gives us diseases or strikes us down. Rather, I think most of that is just a result of living in this world. After all, how many people living in this world do you know that are 150 years of age or older? We all live – we all die...it's the way of the world. What I tend to believe in such situations is that God walks with us, and just maybe he helps us to find lessons in all of this that will help us to become better people, or that will help someone else who is witnessing our life event.

Not unlike most people, I've experienced a number of tragic situations in my life. I am hardly a Pollyanna...and in each event I went through periods of anger (maybe a little fear of the unknown) and uncertainty as to my courses of action. However, I never felt like God was punishing me for something or being vengeful in some way or abandoning me. As a matter of fact it was my faith in God's love and compassion that helped pull me through each time (sometimes kicking and screaming along the way), but got me through none the less. And compared to that of many others, my faith is just a mustard seed – a tiny speck of what it probably should be.

OK, maybe I DO have questions. More to come.....

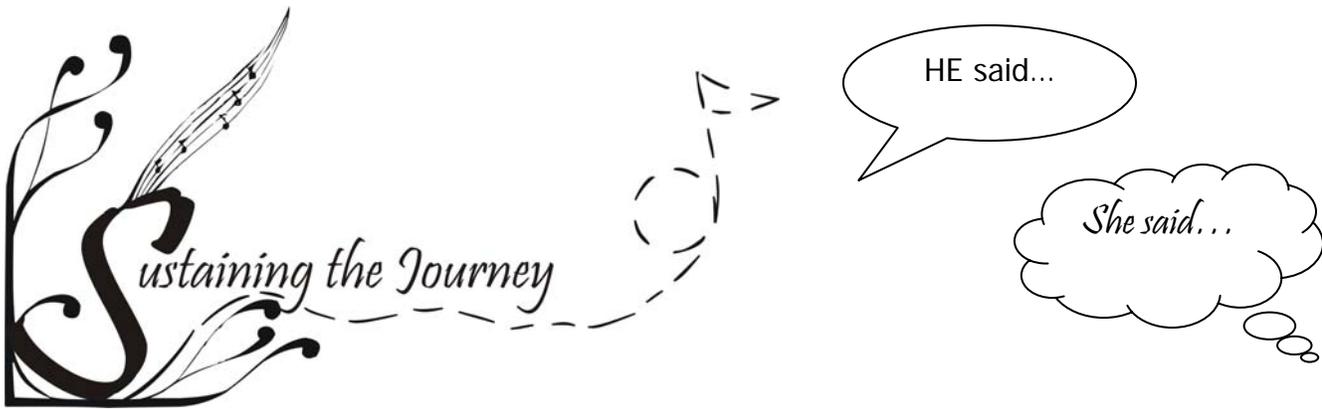
*Mary's perspective*

*And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to [this] mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.*

*(Luke 17:5-6)*

Two pretty short verses to convey a message...

I'm not much of a gardener (black thumb) but a friend told me a mustard seed is smaller than a poppy seed - more like the grains that come out of a pepper shaker. And a mulberry tree has these crazy strong roots that give it lots of stability. So if that little pepper grain is all the size of



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faith it takes to move a giant tree, then I must be a lousy follower! Because I can't even get my 11-year-old to finish her homework and pack tomorrow's lunch before bedtime, let alone command a tree to move!

I went on to read my bible a little more... The little note at the bottom says "these sayings remind them [the apostles] that Christian disciples can make no claim on God's graciousness; in fulfilling the exacting demands of discipleship, **they are only doing their duty.**"

Jesus told us that with a little faith, we can accomplish great things. A smile...a card...perhaps a shared loaf of banana bread...It truly doesn't take much to make a big difference in the world.

We are called to offer all we have back to God. Call it stewardship...or your baptismal call...or "fulfilling the exacting demands of discipleship". But all God asks for is our best. We don't have to move mulberry trees necessarily - just do our best to make a difference in the world. For today, that's enough!