

These two parables stand together because they both speak about a remarkable transformation: but it is in each case a transformation for which the stage is already set by the nature of what is transformed: it is the nature of a seed that it should bring forth a tree, it is in the nature of yeast that it should leaven a measure of flour.

This quality in things is what philosophers call “finality”; there’s a purpose for everything whose realising can be called *the reason for it*, the thing that allows it to make sense. We can give it its name and its value, and come to enjoy its presence. And we can even say that there is a good or bad seed, or that there is a seed we want (parsnip Hollow Crown) and another we don’t want (dandelion): not at all based on the seed as a seed, but on the unseen thing it will produce. It’s by their fruits that we know them, as Jesus said. By their *finality*.

If things have finality, even more do people. But here we are in the realm of mystery. Augustine, who was a great thinker and a great human being. Concluded that in a special way human beings are made for the purposes of God, and that we can therefore only know the finality of people to the degree that we know God.

*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and we know no rest until we rest in you.*

This “rest” is the sabbath-rest which comes only when our work is completed, and all the transformation God has destined for us has taken place. Of course, we could attempt all sorts of other transformations not written in God’s will, and these might interfere with the fruition of the mind of God in us. Usually he has ways of frustrating our worst ideas, in his mercy, and allowing the noble rot he has designed for us to set in. Until all of this has come to perfection, we will not be at rest, and there will be processes afoot in us that need time to reach their term. We should recall that the finished product of all of them will be a gift of divine glory.

We need endless patience and divine wisdom if we are to pass peacefully through these times. Let us ask God to share them with us.