

HOMILY

The Greek word for “weed” used in this parable refers to a weed called “darnel.” The “darnel” weed looks identical to wheat as it begins to grow—only when it is nearly mature can you tell the difference. That’s why the master refuses to uproot the weeds because, as he says to the slaves, “...for in gathering the weeds you would uproot [the] wheat”.

So the Lord’s first message to us is that it is not easy to know who belongs to the Kingdom of God. You and I know people with the same Christian values that we have but with no faith in God. They may even be members of the Church. What to do about them? Do nothing! It’s too dangerous to weed them out of the Church because it so easy to get it wrong. Also, it’s not our place to judge and uproot what seems to be the weeds. In the parable Jesus tells us to wait until the final harvest when He will send His reapers to separate the weeds from the wheat. We know His teaching, “Judge not that you may not be judged.” Why? Because we are not able to judge a person’s motives and intentions with accuracy; we don’t have enough knowledge. But we can judge behaviour we see to be good or bad. But any such judgement, on our part, has to be carried out with compassion, and only with the intention of helping.

Again, Jesus is challenging us to look at ourselves: “How do I know whether or not I am the wheat or a weed? It should be easy enough, right? The children of the wicked one (the weeds) don’t believe in God; they live without obedience to him; their priority is on their own comfort rather than the needs of others; they don’t pray; and they don’t forgive their enemies. Right!?! Sadly at times, this describes myself, and perhaps you too.

Can it be that maturity is the issue here? If so, the only danger for us is the refusal to mature from the weed into the wheat. Thankfully, we have a Lord who delays his judgment until the final harvest, patiently waiting for us to return to him no matter how many times we turn away. I am grateful, you too are grateful, that we belong to the Church which offers the opportunity of healing through repentance, and the saving encounter with the Lord in Holy Communion. Not until the age of maturity can the weeds be distinguished from the wheat, so God is looking for a mature faith but also a faith that is awake. After all, the enemy sowed his seeds while everyone was asleep.

What does it mean to be asleep? It means not living according to the Faith, being spiritually lazy; compromising our faith with things that distract us from the Lord; turning our back on him and so breaking our relationship with him; cutting ourselves off from his peace and healing. Preferring anything over God and his love for us. That’s being asleep.

What does it mean to be awake? It means to be sober. It means to cling as closely to the Truth, Jesus Christ. Being awake means being in prayer, always. The night Jesus was betrayed, he instructed his disciples to, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak”. Don’t give up on prayer.

Serious stuff this! We are blessed with a warm invitation to look at this parable in light of our first reading. There we heard, God’s “care is for all people...”. That means you and I. Even if we are more like the weeds than the true grain, more like the hard of heart than the pure of heart, God is looking at us with trust that we will turn and be healed. How do we know this? In this same first reading we hear, “...you have filled your children with good hope...”.

“Good hope!” What a lovely statement! And it is true! God has definitely filled us with hope. Hope in His mercy, hope in His love, hope in His forgiveness. And what is the condition for the success of this hope? The first reading tells us again, “...because you give repentance for sins”. So let us in this Mass ask that we never become weary of repenting; never become tired of saying, “Lord I have sinned”. Let us ask to become little, knowing our nothingness; trusting in the wonderful love pouring out of the heart of Jesus. The same heart given to us in Communion.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

16th Sunday In Ordinary Time—July 19, 2020

Priest:

In our first reading, St Paul reminds us that it is the Holy Spirit that lifts up our hearts in prayer. Trusting in this gracious gift we bring our needs to the Lord.

LECTOR: “Lord, Hear Our Prayer”

Your Spirit, O Lord, “...intercedes with sighs too deep for words”.
Grant that Your Church will always pray in the Holy Spirit,
so that every member will open their heart to God:

We pray...

Give to governments around the world the ability and compassion
to help the poorest of the poor suffering in this pandemic:

We pray...

We give you thanks for our new pastor, Fr David Gikonyo; we ask
that you bless him with your Holy Spirit so that he may be a blessing to us:

We pray...

Give us trust, we sinners, along with all who feel the burden of sin,
that You are mild in judgement, and will show us how to be kind to one another:

We pray...

Bring our sick and shut-ins to know your love: (especially);
Angelita Serrano; _____

We pray...

As our dead come before you, show them your merciful face (especially):
Fr Franco Ierardi; _____

We pray...

In our silence now, let the light of your presence shine in us (PAUSE):

We Pray...

Priest:

God of mercy and compassion,
slow to anger, turn and take pity on us,
embrace us by your love and truth.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.