

16th Sunday in the Ordinary Time Year A

Jesus was an excellent teacher and he wanted us to understand his teachings. He did not give lectures in theology but simply told stories. They were not only means for *learning* the truth they were challenges to *living* the truth. He wanted us not only to accept his teachings but invites us to probe them in order that we may discover the riches hidden deep within them. In our Gospel Jesus gives simple stories from everyday life to teach us about eternal life. How good God is, is demonstrated through these stories and as briefly stated from the book of Wisdom in our first reading, it speaks of God's compassion tempered with justice and mercy, "*Your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.*" It was in this leniency and compassion that '*God created everything good.*' But people have wondered, if all of God's creation is good *why is there evil in the world?* Why it continues to exist indeed puzzles us.

A better answer can be found in Jesus' parable today. "*Let them grow together*". The owner disapproved his workers' decision to immediately uproot the weeds. Not only had they blamed someone they even accused the owner of not sowing good seeds. Yet the owner was confident his wheat could tolerate the presence of weeds. He knows his patience will be rewarded at harvest time. There will be a time to separate the weeds from the wheat. Like the farmer in the parable that's how God acts: "*Patiently bearing with us through all of our sins.*" As the letter to the Romans demonstrates, "*the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness, and the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit.*" Yes we must try to eliminate evil & not condone it. There are no shortcuts in our work for goodness and justice. With this message goes the warning that we should not be less patient than God.

Today Jesus' words may be addressed to those who are dismayed because His Church contains so many hypocrites, people who keep celebrating Mass on

Sundays but whose lives are not consistent with their religious life. But the question is: Where can you find a Church that doesn't contain hypocrites? A young man shocked by bad elements in church met his pastor: "*I stopped going to church; I find so many hypocrites there.*" Pausing briefly, the priest replied, "*Son, there's always room for one more.*" The Church is certainly not a garden without weeds, as reflected in the parable. Even Jesus did not weed out people like Peter and Judas. He gave hope to sinners who want to repent. If we exclude sinners *where would we be? 'Life isn't about finding yourself. It's about creating yourself in God's image.'* That God delays his final purification till harvest time is comforting. However, the delay is also a warning. One day there will be an end of further chances, and then judgment follows.

The parable of the mustard seed also directs our attention to doing good no matter how small in order to build up the kingdom of God. *Show your faith!* If we lose the opportunity to witness our faith, speak our mind and discuss what unites us we risk moving into a dangerous situation. Today there are people who are speaking out not only against an established authority that brings law and order but also tested and essential values that make us who we are. The problem with this attitude is the blind eye turned to the good things in what our ancestors had built—and instead the belief that Freedom of speech means the right to remove or destroy with impunity to fit the current political narrative. History won't be changed if you try to cancel, remove, or forget it. Take your hurt feelings and go to Jesus, live in Him through and with Him! Every great person... all of us have flaws. Judge people of history not by today's standards but by the standards of their time. Yes, they certainly did wrong but they also did great things that should be remembered and be thankful for!

All of us have the potential and ability to contribute for the betterment and the transformation of our society. We should not belittle those gifts, *we are the yeast in*

the leaven bread, ‘Do not wait for things to happen make them happen!’ Even one individual or a small group of people can make a world of difference in the lives of others. It’s a matter of attitude! *What example are we giving to our community?* Keep in mind, **“An ounce of practice is worth a pound of preaching.”** We must be willing to take risks, leave room for failure in some of our undertakings, and accept setbacks in our honest efforts. Not all our good intentions or good things we have done will be acknowledged, appreciated and repaid. Not all the work we undertake will profit. We must give what we can. God will take care to make it bear fruit. What is essential is to take care of every small seed of the kingdom with the utmost faithfulness, and God will make it grow.

This Sunday we are challenged to do our part. Jesus assures us the goodness that we do no matter how small or insignificant will, like the mustard seed, produce great results. No matter how long it takes we should stay on the road of goodness and justice, overcoming evil with good. *God does his part. Let us do our part.* May the Lord bless us with *love, patience, perseverance and a prayerful life* so that we may produce an abundant harvest! Amen.