

23 July 2017 (Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time)

Wisdom 12:13,16-19; Psalm 85:5-6,9-10,15-16; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43.

Let [the wheat and the darnel] both grow till the harvest!

I am sure that if only God had asked our opinion on how to organise things in the world, we would have done a much better job at it! For one, we would have created everything good and eliminated all the evil. It is curious how God did not think of this one when he was creating the world!

In today's gospel Jesus teaches us by using three different parables: the kingdom of heaven is like a field, some yeast and a mustard seed.

In the parable of the weeds among the wheat Jesus talks to us about the problem of evil in this world. Why is it that God lets evil live along with the good, ending up making life so miserable for the good? Like the farm hands in the parable we often think that there is an easy solution to that question: just walk in and pull out the weeds while they are still small! The problem is that when the plants are still young, you could not tell the weeds from the wheat, and you might think you are pulling out weeds, when in fact you end up pulling out wheat! Secondly, their roots are so closely intertwined together that it is almost impossible to pull out the weeds without causing serious damage to the wheat. So it is best to let them both grow together and let God decide between good and evil at the ends of time.

God does not seem to be worried if the beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven seem to be small or if the Kingdom seems to be taking its time to grow and mature. After all only a small amount of yeast is used to raise three measures of flour, and yet the effect of the yeast is felt all through the whole pastry.

Similarly, the mustard seed is only a very small seed, but when it grows it becomes a big shrub, offering shelter to many birds.

Very often we experience this struggle between good and evil within ourselves. We start with many good intentions. We have plans to reach out and love and be kind to all those around us. Yet we often find that regardless of all our very good intentions, we fail. There seems to be many weeds even in us, destroying all our best efforts.

In today's gospel Jesus invites us not to worry. In many ways the existence of weeds in our own daily lives makes the wheat shine out more. The struggle against the evil in ourselves makes us more determined to achieve what is good and to mature as disciples of Jesus. Moreover some aspects we may think of as evil may in the long run be good too. Perhaps it is not up to us to decide, our job is to continue striving to be faithful followers; to continue caring for the wheat. Even if we think that the good in us is very little, and at times it risks being suffocated, God can perform miracles if we allow him to work with our little amount of yeast and our tiny mustard seed.

Even if we look around and think of some people as being evil in our world: God gives them too the chance to grow and mature and what in our human eyes may look like weeds, might in fact be wheat because often it is so difficult to tell the difference between weeds and wheat!

Our job is twofold: to pray that we continue on our faithful following of Jesus and that the Kingdom of God may continue to grow in our midst.

Fr Mario