

# Sunday Message

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 23 July 2023 • Psalter Week 4

## THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

(MATTHEW 13: 24-43) – LONGER FORM

(MATTHEW 13: 24-30) – SHORTER FORM



Today we are presented with three parables explaining how the kingdom of God interacts with the world.

The parable of the weeds demonstrates the good and evil that co-exist in the world. The mustard seed reminds us that our actions of mercy and love can have small beginnings but will grow into something much greater. The yeast expresses that the church is indeed very much part of a society that will contradict and challenge its teachings and activities. These parables also show that the kingdom of God is very much alive and active in the world. Jesus never said that being part of a Church was going to be easy.

The kingdom of God is brought about when we as individuals interact with the world in a spirit of respect, compassion, freedom and truth. Our term of reference is Jesus Christ. We confront evil in our world and are challenged by it. We sow seeds of love and kindness that will bear much fruit in our lives and the lives of others. And finally, we are inextricably linked to a world that can form us and educate us. But this world also needs to hear our message of Christ's love and compassion for all. ■

### LEARN

'Jesus' invitation to enter his kingdom comes in the form of parables, a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything. Words are not enough, deeds are required. The parables are like mirrors for man: will he be hard soil or good earth for the word?' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 546)

### SAY

'Memories of our lives, of our works and our deeds will continue in others.'  
(Rosa Parks)

### DO

Think of something you can do for your parish this week. A visit to someone who's sick or living on their own is always a good start or maybe a phone call to your parish priest to see if any volunteers are needed for a future project.

### REFLECT



Apple iPhones and computers have become the landmark and standard tools for the average internet user. There are other brand names of course but Apple seems to have led the industry with their expertise and brilliant innovative technologies. When Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak invented the Apple Computer, they quickly realised that they hadn't the organisational capabilities to get the company off the ground. They had brilliant ideas but needed greater management expertise. They approached the President of Pepsi, John Sculley, asking him to leave his position and come join them. Sculley declined the invitation but Jobs and Wozniak were persistent. They went back to him again and again. Eventually Steve Jobs said to him, 'Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water, or do you want a chance to change the world?' Indeed, Jobs and Sculley went on to change the world.

This is the very task being presented by Jesus through three parables today. How are we going to change the world? When you think about it, it's quite a daunting task. We spend a lot of our days working to earn money, to support our family, to buy nice things, to pay the bills. But what do we actually do for the Church? Are we changing the world in the way we confront evil and injustice? Are we planting seeds of compassion and love through our actions and conversations? What is our response when society challenges a belief or teaching that we hold dear? When bringing about the kingdom of God on earth, we change the world. Like the mustard seed, it happens one small step at a time. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

See, I have God for my help.  
The Lord sustains my soul.  
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart,  
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants  
and mercifully increase the gifts of your  
grace,  
that, made fervent in hope, faith, and charity,  
they may be ever watchful in keeping your  
commands.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

There is no god, other than you, who cares  
for everything,  
to whom you might have to prove that you  
never judged unjustly.  
Your justice has its source in strength,  
your sovereignty over all makes you lenient  
to all.  
You show your strength when your sovereign  
power is questioned  
and you expose the insolence of those who  
know it;  
but, disposing of such strength, you are mild  
in judgement,  
you govern us with great lenience,  
for you have only to will, and your power is  
there.  
By acting thus you have taught a lesson to  
your people  
how the virtuous man must be kindly to his  
fellow men,  
and you have given your sons the good hope  
that after sin you will grant repentance.  
The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 85(86):5-6,9-10,15-16

Response:  
O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

- O Lord, you are good and forgiving,  
full of love to all who call.  
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer  
and attend to the sound of my voice. (R.)
- All the nations shall come to adore you  
and glorify your name, O Lord:  
for you are great and do marvellous deeds,  
you who alone are God. (R.)
- But you, God of mercy and compassion,  
slow to anger, O Lord,  
abounding in love and truth,  
turn and take pity on me. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Romans 8:26-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness.  
For when we cannot choose words in order  
to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses  
our plea in a way that could never be put into  
words, and God who knows everything in our  
hearts knows perfectly well what he means,  
and that the pleas of the saints expressed by  
the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord  
Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind,  
so that we can see what hope his call holds  
for us.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Matthew 13:24-43

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

Jesus put a parable before the crowds: 'The  
kingdom of heaven may be compared to  
a man who sowed good seed in his field.  
While everybody was asleep his enemy  
came, sowed darnel all among the wheat,  
and made off. When the new wheat sprouted  
and ripened, the darnel appeared as well.  
The owner's servants went to him and said,  
"Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed  
in your field? If so, where does the darnel  
come from?" "Some enemy has done this"  
he answered. And the servants said, "Do you  
want us to go and weed it out?" But he said,  
"No, because when you weed out the darnel  
you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them  
both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time  
I shall say to the reapers: First collect the  
darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then  
gather the wheat into my barn.'"

He put another parable before them: 'The  
kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed  
which a man took and sowed in his field. It  
is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it  
has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and  
becomes a tree so that the birds of the air  
come and shelter in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The  
kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman  
took and mixed in with three measures of  
flour till it was leavened all through.'

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in  
parables; indeed, he would never speak to  
them except in parables. This was to fulfil the  
prophecy:

I will speak to you in parables  
and expound things hidden since the  
foundation of the world.

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the  
house; and his disciples came to him and  
said, 'Explain the parable about the darnel in  
the field to us.' He said in reply, 'The sower  
of the good seed is the Son of Man. The field  
is the world; the good seed is the subjects of  
the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the  
evil one; the enemy who sowed them, the  
devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the  
reapers are the angels. Well then, just as the  
darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire,  
so it will be at the end of time. The Son of  
Man will send his angels and they will gather  
out of his kingdom all things that provoke  
offences and all who do evil, and throw  
them into the blazing furnace, where there  
will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then  
the virtuous will shine like the sun in the  
kingdom of their Father. Listen, anyone who  
has ears!'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
*(all bow during the next two lines)*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice  
brought to completion varied offerings of the  
law,  
accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your  
faithful servants  
and make it holy, as you blessed the gifts of  
Abel,  
so that what each has offered to the honour  
of your majesty  
may benefit the salvation of all.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful,  
has made a memorial of his wonders;  
he gives food to those who fear him.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Graciously be present to your people, we  
pray, O Lord,  
and lead those you have imbued with  
heavenly mysteries  
to pass from former ways to newness of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.