

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 19, 2020

“God gives us space for repentance.”

Wisdom is the very last book in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus was a teenager when the last chapter was written. Thus the issues and conditions it deals with are ones still bubbling and brewing in Jesus’ day. And the occupied nation of Israel yearned for justice if not vengeance. But what they got instead was a picture of a powerful yet lenient God, who proclaims: “that those who are just must be kind.” Furthermore, that kindly God gave us “good ground for hope” that God would “permit repentance for their sins.”

The call to “be kind” is a call to be “*philanthropos*” – “one who loves people”..... all people. And it’s an invitation to suspend judgment and leave that to God. We are called to be like *philanthropos* Jesus, who loves people and gives them time to change their errant ways and follow him.

Today’s Gospel, Matthew 13:24-43, is a Scriptural sandwich: two tiny parables (mustard seed and yeast) wedged between the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds (which is only found in Matthew) and the interpretation of that parable. The two smaller parables are found in one or more of the Gospels. Here’s a breakdown:

- Wheat and the Weeds = 13:24-30 [unique to Matthew]
 - Mustard Seed = Mark 4:30-32
Matthew 31-32
Luke 13:28-29
 - Woman with flour and yeast = Matthew 13:33
Luke 13:20-21
 - Why speak in parables? = Matthew 13:35
Mark 4:33-34
- Interpretation = Matthew 13:36-43 (Matthew alone)

Some of us grew up with this Parable being called “The Wheat and the Tares”. Others heard it as “The Wheat and the Darnel”. Our

New American Bible translation just flattens it out and calls the unwanted plants “weeds”. But in the original Greek version it referred to a specific plant – *Lolium temulentum*, a mimic weed, which grows among grain, particularly wheat which its grains resemble. “Tares” are the plants; “darnel” is what it produces. Darnel flour is poisonous, but in small doses it is just bitter to the taste. But birds, particularly doves, like that bitter taste! Ancient Agriculturalists demonstrated that by thorough separation of the darnel seeds from the weed seeds, tares do not grow – a process yielding what we call today weed-less “certified seed”.

Clarence Jordan’s Gospel paraphrase, *The Cotton Patch Gospel*, translates this reading into rural Southern culture by specifying the kind of weed as “zizania,” which is a broad-leafed switch grass that resembles wild rice and which was a common noxious weed in south Georgia about as unwanted as kudzu.

“Then Jesus laid before them another Comparison: ‘The God Movement is like a man who planted certified seed in his field. Then after everybody had gone to bed, his enemy came and over-planted the wheat with zizania. When it came up and started to grow, the zizania was clearly present. The farmer’s field hands came to him and said: ‘Sir, didn’t you plant certified seed in your field? Then how come it’s got zizania in it?’ He replied, ‘An enemy did that!’ The field-hands asked, ‘Do you want us to go and chop it out?’ The farmer said, ‘No, because you may dig up the wheat with the zizania. Let them both grow until harvest-time. Then I’ll say to the harvest workers, ‘Gather all the zizania first and pile it up for burning, and then harvest the wheat and put it in my barn.’” – Matthew 13:24-30

This parable is a cautionary tale to the disciples, who are warned not to attempt to anticipate the final judgment of God by excluding people from the God’s kingdom, which in its present stage is made up of both the good and the bad. God alone will be the judge at the end times. Meanwhile, be patient and preach repentance. As Matthew 5:45 reminds us, God makes the sun to shine on the bad and the good and rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Who knows, maybe they’ll repent. Maybe we will too. Let the church say, “Ouch.”

Benedictan Scripture commentator Sr. Verna A Holyhead describes this in-between time in which we live: “Patience is needed until the end-time because the evil in a person’s heart may be transformed into good by God’s grace; anger may come to be expressed as work for justice, laziness as active patience, or acquisitiveness as generosity.” [Building on the Rock: Welcoming the Word in Year A]

The confidence of the Landowner that the wheat will survive the effect of its co-mingling with the weeds is worth pondering. As John J. Pilch writes in The Cultural World of Jesus, “A trust in goodness that is greater than the fear of wickedness could be a powerful weapon against violence. It has worked before in history and could work again if given a chance.”

Liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez O.P. reminds us that God “is demanding and kind” and does not overwhelm us. The Lord of the Harvest “does not suppress the weeds immediately; the call to conversion is ongoing. We are constantly called to be the wheat which is life-giving” (Sharing the Word through the Liturgical Year).

The mustard seed parable inspires Sister Verna to write, “there is encouragement for the Christian community struggling with its small beginnings or, like today’s church, faced in some places with the diminution of what once was ‘big,’ such as priestly and religious vocations or well-attended Masses....Jesus says small seed are enough to grow into welcoming bushes.”

We get a third parable that compares God to a woman with hands in the flour mixing in three measures of leaven – which would produce a loaf that could feed at least 150 people! This is Matthew’s only parable with a female image of God, and also is the only positive reference to yeast or leaven, which usually symbolizes corruption. Sister Verna observes: “And here is the challenge: as Jesus taught the realm of God is permeated by those whom man ‘purists’ might consider ‘corrupt’ – the poor, the outcast, the marginalized – who will be the active ingredient for the growth of the kingdom.” The parable not only spurs us to expand our image of God as a woman, and to reflect on the role of women in the church.

Last week, Paul's epistle to the Romans had all creation and all of us groaning. This week, it's the Spirit who is doing the groaning within us and identifies with our weaknesses. The Spirit prays within us spurring us on to change and becoming more other directed.

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home – July 12, 2020
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Opening Hymn

Sing along with **Worthy God – M. Roger Holland II**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXpgSVP7g38>

Leader: In the name of the Father, † and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: *Amen*

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you invite us to hear your word:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you promise that the righteous will shine like the sun:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you beckon us to enter into God's reign of love:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

O God, patient and forbearing,
you alone know fully
the goodness of what you have made.

Strengthen our spirit when we are slow
and temper our zeal when we are rash,
that in your own good time
you may produce in us a rich harvest
from the seed you have sown and tended.

We make our prayer 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. Let the church say – Amen.

Readings for the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

¹³ There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned.

¹⁶ For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.

¹⁷ For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity.

¹⁸ But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you.

¹⁹ And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

⁵ You, O LORD, are good and forgiving,^{{}{}{}}
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.^{{}{}{}}

⁶ Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer,^{{}{}{}}
and attend to the sound of my pleading.^{{}{}{}}

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

⁹ All the nations you have made shall come^{{}{}{}}and
worship you, O LORD,^{{}{}{}}and glorify your name.^{{}{}{}}

¹⁰ For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds;^{{}{}{}}
you alone are God.^{{}{}{}}

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

15 You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity.

16 Turn toward me, and have pity on me;
give your strength to your servant.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

2nd Reading – Romans 8:26-27

26 Brothers and sisters: The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings.

27 And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God!

Alleluia – CF. Matthew 11:25

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

25 Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – Matthew 13:24-43 [Shorter version, verses 24-30]

24 Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field.

25 While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off.

26 When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well.

27 The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?'

28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?'

29 He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them.

30 Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.""

[³¹ He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field.

³² It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.”

³³ He spoke to them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened.”

³⁴ All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables,

³⁵ to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation^[17]_{SEP} of the world.

³⁶ Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.”

³⁷ He said in reply, “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man,

³⁸ the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom.

The weeds are the children of the evil one,

³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

⁴⁰ Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.

⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers.

⁴² They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”]

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

Before reflecting, center yourselves by listening to the classic Walter Hawkins anthem, “Change,” sung by Tramaine Hawkins.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcAJK1cl_9Y

Sister Verna gives us hope that our journeys of conversion may transform us: “anger may come to be expressed as work for justice, laziness as active patience, or acquisitiveness as generosity.”

1. How have we seen growth in ourselves over the past few years? Have we experienced transformations? Are there other areas where you pray change in yourself?
2. How can you become more of a *philanthropus* – a lover of human beings, “warts and all”? Is there a person with whom you are being patient? For what do people need to be patient about you?

Ideas for Your Daily Meditations

Douglas Miller singing his composition, “My Soul’s Been Anchored.”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9B8RCeJ4hm4>

In these “Sheltering in Place Days,” we’re told that sales are way up for gardening supplies and bread baking ingredients, so the two little “sandwiched” parables in today’s Gospel may have extra meaning in your household these days. For novice gardeners, it’s amazing when tiny seeds, bulbs or corms sprout up into towering flowers or edible herbs. First encounters with bread baking also hold out opportunities to be in wonder about how a tiny speck of yeast can fluff up a wad of flour into a chubby loaf. Jesus invites us to be in awe of these everyday miracles, and then know that they are like the reign of God growing among us.

1. How have you been amazed by Nature? Have you stopped to smell the roses, watch a cloud drift across the sky, hear a birdsong, gaze at the moon and stars, or been enveloped by the quiet of a wooded path?
2. Meditate on a time you had in Nature – on a mountain top or ocean shore, botanical garden or zoo, desert waste or redwood forest, in a heavy fog or driving rain, watching the sun set or moon rise. How have you had feelings of awe and gratitude in those moments?

Then move into a silent visualization of one of those experiences before beginning the intercessions.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – July 19, 2020
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Presider: Let us put God’s Word into action by praying for the needs of our world.

Worship Leader

1. For the church: that it may clearly proclaim God’s loving invitation to all people. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.** (RESPOND: **Hear our groans, O God.**)
2. For those who demonstrate God’s love by caring for the poor, the vulnerable and the unloved. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**
3. For those who feel alone, rejected, unloved — especially children; and for all who have never experienced God’s love. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**
4. For those suffering from the summer heat; and for farmers who depend on good weather for their crops. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**
5. For those in this community whose needs we may not know, that our Stephen Ministers and Care Team can be a balm for them. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**
6. For peace and healing for Joyce Peters-Natter, whose intentions are included in this Mass. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**
7. For all our loved ones in the military and their families, that they be returned to us safely and experience a welcoming community. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**
8. For those seeking gainful employment, that they will find jobs with living wages and humane benefits, and in the meantime be able to

keep avoid homelessness, hunger and health crises. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**

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9. For all those besieged by the corona-virus, and for health care and essential workers, that they find healing and safety. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**

10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**

11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Marion Chineworth and for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**

12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Hear our groans, O God.**

Presider: Gracious God, you search our hearts and interpret our groaning. Help us to believe that we are, indeed, worthy of your love. Show us how to reflect that love to others, especially those in most need of it. We make our prayer in the name of your Son, who gave himself for us. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Then sing or recite The Lord's Prayer.

Listen to "Lord Help Me to Hold Out," from a tribute album to Rev. James Cleveland and the Clouds of Joy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7UY8inmKHU>

Closing Prayer

Eternal God,
you draw near to us in Christ and make yourself our guest.
Amid the cares of our daily lives, make us attentive to your voice
and alert to your presence,

that we may treasure your word above all else.
We ask this 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.

Close out by singing along with Aretha Franklin to “Amazing Grace”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVeloewwXmE>

Take time to behold the sunflowers and the moon rises.