

**GOSPEL***Matthew 13:24-43*

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 fulfill 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!

**HOMILY OF ST JOHN PAUL II***19 July 1987 Excerpt*

The readings that the Liturgy of this sixteenth Sunday of the year proposes for our meditation certainly contain the deepest and most illuminating core of the entire Christian message.

Indeed, what most torments human intelligence is the presence of evil in history, its origins, and its purpose; only by answering these questions can man draw light to solve the problem of his existence.

Jesus, with the parable of the good grain and the weeds, which he himself later interpreted and explained, reveals the reason and meaning of this tragic reality.

First of all, he clearly states that evil exists, is present, and is dynamic in human history. However, it cannot come from God, the Creator, who by essence is infinite and eternal Good.

God is the sower of good seed; first with creation itself, which is radically and metaphysically positive, and then with Redemption, because "he who sows the good seed is the son of man. The good seed are the sons of the kingdom." Evil comes from the "enemy" and from those who follow him: "The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil."

We find ourselves here faced with the freedom that God has given to rational creatures: this is the most sublime and most tragic reality because, misused, it is the cause of the germination of discord in the life of the individual and in the history of humanity.

The drama of history consists precisely in this coexistence of the good wheat with the weeds until the end of history, until the harvest: it is impossible, today, to think of human history without weeds; and that is—as Jesus himself says—it is impossible to completely eradicate the weeds, because they are mixed with good.

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The weeds live and grow in the fields of the world; but the good wheat also lives and thrives; the mustard seed also grows and develops, becoming a leafy and hospitable tree; the leaven of goodness hidden in the midst of humanity also grows and ferments.

With extreme simplicity, but with supreme authority, Jesus makes us understand that the whole of human history, however long and troubled, has as its culmination the final “harvest”: what truly matters is not the passing history, but the eternity that awaits us.

From the liturgical readings we must therefore draw three fundamental directives for our life:

- we must commit ourselves to being good seed and to continually sowing good seed, eliminating everything that can cause harm, mental confusion, bad example, or incitement to evil; indeed, we must commit ourselves to transforming the weeds, as far as possible, into good seed. We all have a great ideal and a magnificent undertaking to achieve;

- we must listen attentively and scrupulously to the inspirations the Lord makes us feel about our lives, given to us solely with a view to eternal happiness. It is easy, and natural, in our prayers to dwell rather on temporal and earthly interests. But, as St. Paul says in the second reading of the Mass, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought." And therefore "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words; and he who searches our hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is" ( Rom 8:26-27);

- finally, we must always keep our trust in the Lord alive and fervent, because - as the Book of Wisdom says - God judges with meekness and governs with great indulgence (cf. Wis 12:16).

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



**Head:** Why do you think Jesus says the wheat and weeds must grow together until the harvest?



**Heart:** John Paul II says that the drama of history is the coexistence of good and evil, not only in the world but within human lives. Where do you most feel this tension between what draws you toward God and what pulls you away from him?



**Hands:** What is one concrete act of goodness, encouragement, or witness that you can intentionally sow this week?

## PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.