

Homily of Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time Year A, 2023

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19; Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-30

The first reading reminds us that God is a God of mercy but also a God of justice. Let us pick a few lines from the reading for a better understanding of this message.

God is a God of mercy:

- “There is no God besides you who have care for all ...”
- “... your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.”
- “But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much leniency, you govern all ...”

God is a God of justice:

- “For your might is the source of justice ...”
- “You show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved;
- and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity.”

Yes, God cares for all and is lenient to all; at the same time, he shows his might when his power is disbelieved! We pray that for the sake of the sufferings and tears of his people, God makes haste to fulfill his word.

The parable of the weeds among the wheat is a touching story of how an enemy sowed weeds in a wheat field. One wonders why the enemy could not use such time to sow good seeds in his own field. Why take so much time, effort, and risk to destroy another person’s good work? Those who commit crime spend restless days and sleepless nights in their evil deeds. The world would be a better place if those who carry out evil deeds spend such time and effort in doing good work.

The question we often ask is, “Why does God not intervene promptly and root out evil and evil people?” We may not be able to unravel the mystery behind the presence of evil in the world, and the mystery of what we often call ‘God’s silence.’ 2 Peter 3:9 instructs us, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” God is a God of mercy.

The parable concludes with the following words, “... 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.’” This means that there is always a day of reckoning when good triumphs over evil; when God shows his might. God is a God of justice.

The parable, also, encourages us to stand firm and stay strong in our world infested with weeds. We are not to allow ourselves to be overtaken by weeds. We are to stand

our ground and not spend our whole energy crying and wanting the weeds to be uprooted. Unfortunately, the battle between light and darkness has existed from the very beginning of the world and will continue. St. Paul challenges us in Romans 12:21, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Jesus uses the parable to teach us the reality of evil in the world and to encourage us that evil does not have the last word. The Evil One and his agents will never stop sowing weeds. Therefore, we must always be prepared and not be caught unaware by their weeds. St. Peter, also, encourages us, “Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings” (1 Peter 5:8).

Another striking point about the parable is the reaction of the servants and the response of the field owner. The servants wanted to go immediately and pull up the weeds. The servants represent the times our judgements are premature and the times we rush to quick solutions. The field owner, on the other hand, teaches us patience, proper timing, and mature judgement.

Lastly, St. Paul tells us in the second reading that no matter how we try, “... we do not know how to pray as we ought.” It is the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us according to God’s will. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “the Advocate” (John 14:26, John 16:7). He is our spiritual attorney. He arranges our prayers “with inexpressible groaning.” Another translation says, “... the Holy Spirit prays for us in ways that cannot be put into words” (Romans 8:26). All we need to do is pray and leave the rest to the Holy Spirit. This is very consoling and encouraging regarding our prayer life.

Let us pray:

HOLY SPIRIT, SANCTIFY MY PRAYER;

HOLY SPIRIT, DIRECT MY PRAYER;

HOLY SPIRIT, INTERCEDE FOR ME.

AMEN.

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