

16th Sun A - July 23 – 24, 2017

01. Wis 12:13, 16 – 19; 02. Rom 8:26 – 27; 03. Mt 13: 24 – 43

My sisters and brothers,

A few years ago, I received a phone call in the night asking me to come immediately to the hospital. I reached the hospital in about half an hour only to find a big gathering of family members around a boy of 19 who was battling for his life. Almost everyone in that room was in tears. I saw his mother sitting beside him, holding his hand, weeping profusely. To my surprise, I found the father standing aloof near to the window, almost motionless. I paved my way through the crowd, stood very close to the boy and prayed. After my prayer, I went over to the father, tapped on his shoulder and asked what happened. He took me outside the room to a considerable distance and just broke down in tears saying, “Father, I killed him, I killed him.” I didn’t know what had happened. His father was a dealer in drug trafficking. That business brought in a lot of money. He wanted to educate his son to a high position but sadly his son fell victim to substance abuse in the college with his friends. He is in the hospital because of drug overdose.

We are imperfect beings though we were created good. Much of what we do and say is imperfect. None of us were born a drunkard or a drug addict. God didn’t create us to be wicked or evil. But somewhere along the way we have drifted from the plan of God. Now we realize that we are not the same as we thought we would be. Many people live in un-happiness while a good many go through depression and sorrow. A good group of people harbor anger and hatred. It is good to ask ourselves a question: Am I what God wants me to be? For a tree to grow and fulfill its purpose, it must be rooted in the soil to receive its nourishment. Man is

a spiritual being; therefore, he needs both physical and spiritual nourishment. While living in this world he must be well rooted in God to enjoy a peaceful life.

This weekend for our reflection we have before us the continued version of the parable of the sower from the Gospel of Matthew. Today we reflect on the presence of weeds among the wheat. This section of the parable is found only in Matthew. The wheat and the weeds stand for the good and the bad. Did Matthew use these words to differentiate Christians from the pagans, or Christians under persecution from the persecutors? The good seed that produces wheat is sown by the heavenly Father. The bad seed that eventually becomes weeds is sown by the enemy. He does it in the night. He does it when people are sleeping. The enemy in the Bible refers to the devil. His mission is clear – St. John puts it very clearly, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (Jn 10:10). His presence is visible from what we see in and around us. He is a big influence in the world. He looks to be powerful but he is not. He seems to be successful but he is not. The evil one knows that he is fighting a losing battle. He makes his influence and success upon the ignorant. The devil and his minions are busy leading people away from God. The only way to keep people ignorant about the truth is to keep them away from God. For he knows “the truth will set the people free” (Jn 8:32).

In this parable, the central point is the preciousness of the wheat. You are precious in the eyes of God. The parable further speaks about the inevitable reality of the co-existence of good and evil in the world, in our lives and in the very history of the church. Jesus teaches us to see these things with Christian realism and to handle every problem with clear principles, but also with prudence and patience (St. Pope John Paul II, 1991). No doubt, we may have fallen under the influence of evil. We may have accumulated some evil habits. Many people struggle with habitual sins. The story is not over. Jesus came so that we can be free. The forces of evil that surround us are often too compelling that we struggle to live a perfect

Christian life. It is in this struggle of wheat among the weeds that Christians find their way to become saints. St. Augustine says, “There is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future.”

Let no one rob you of your love for God and your faith in God. When you stand before God for judgment, remember you will have nobody with you. You will be alone. You will not get a chance to blame your sins on to others. You will have to assume the responsibility for everything you did. That can be too scary. Now is the time, time to get reconciled with God and neighbor. Now is the time to do what St. Paul said, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

God bless