

Homily by Fr. Anthony Davis

ROOTS AND WEEDS: "Pull up the weeds and you might take the wheat along with them. So let both grow together..."

July 19, 2020

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Wis 12:13, 16-19; Rm 8:26-27; Mt 13:24-43

What can good wheat and malicious weed-sowing tell us about the kingdom of God in today's gospel? A farmer tells his farmhands not to weed his field because they may take up the wheat with the weeds. For some of us, this is an unusual command, for, if farmers applied this in all cases, all weeding would be prohibited. However, the image Jesus uses in this parable is a common everyday example of planting, harvesting, and sorting the good fruit from the bad. Indeed, weeds can spoil and even kill a good harvest if they are not separated and destroyed at the proper time. Uprooting them too early, though, can also destroy the good plants in the process.

"Let God's word take deep root in our hearts": Just as nature teaches us patience, so God's patience also teaches us to guard the seed of his word which he has planted in our hearts and to beware of the destructive force of sin and evil that can destroy it. In other words, God's word brings life, but Satan seeks to destroy the good seed which has been planted in the hearts of those who have heard God's word. However, God's judgment is not hasty, but it does come. And in the end, God will reward each according to what they have sown and reaped in this life. In that day God will separate the evil from the good. And so today God says: "Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Do you allow God's word to take deep root in your heart? Consequently, to "be rooted in Christ and built up in Him, growing ever stronger in faith" (Col 2:7), we must be in the presence of those who are not with the Lord, but following the evil one. In other words, in the parable, the weed does not destroy the wheat. It only makes it more difficult for the wheat to grow to maturity. So it is, with the Christian! Basically, no one can take his/her faith from him/her, but living up to it is made more challenging, by the evil influence and bad examples of sinners. But if some Christians succumb to this evil influence and give up the practice of their faith, the fault is theirs. For due to our gift of free will, God cannot force anyone to serve him.

Moreover, this gives us opportunities to share and defend our faith. By this I mean that, we can forgive these people when they hurt us and love them unconditionally. We can take up our

daily crosses (Lk 9:23) and share in the sufferings of Christ (Col 1:24), and then enable us to practice Christian Charity.

Good and evil are sown in our hearts like tiny seeds which germinate, and in due time yield a harvest of good or bad fruit. Charles Read said: "Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny." In the Day of Judgment each will reap what he or she has sown in this life. Those who sow good will shine in the kingdom of their Father. They will radiate with the beauty, joy, and fullness of God's love. And so, "Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

Lord Jesus, let your word take root in my heart and may your all-consuming love transform my life that I may sow what is good, worthy, and pleasing to you. AMEN!!!