

COLUMNISTS

Leave the final judgment to God

16th Sunday of the Year (July 18): (R3) Matthew 13:24-43. (R1) Wisdom 12:13, 16-19. (R2) Romans 8:26-27.

In Sunday's Gospel our Lord teaches us the parable of the wheat and the weeds. The world is a field where God is continually sowing the seed of his grace. This seed takes root and produces the fruits of holiness. Jesus offers us his grace with such wonderful love! He prepares us like good soil and gives us his saving teachings. But "while everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off."

The weed in question is a plant often found growing in cereal crops in the Middle East. It resembles the wheat so closely that not even the practical eye of the farmer is able to tell the two plants apart until the stalk begins to mature. Then the weeds can be recognized by their slender ear and emaciated grain. The weed is quite toxic to humans and if mixed with the flour will ruin bread. Sowing weeds among the wheat was a form of revenge not unheard of in those countries.

In an old Peanuts cartoon, Charlie Brown is confronted by Lucy. She says to him, "Charlie Brown, you are crabgrass in the lawn of life." For Lucy, in her anger, Charlie Brown is a hindrance, an undesirable, a sore spot that keeps her life from being what she thinks it ought to be.



a word
for
sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

Weeds can be those people or problems that keep life from being the way we want it to be. Weeds can be people who come up with great ideas for programs, but never follow through. Great talkers, but not doers. Weeds can be rumormongers who pass along a damaging bit of gossip and call it a prayer request. Weeds can be those quick to criticize but loathe to help.

The Fathers of the Church understood weeds to be false doctrine. In the beginning it is hard to distinguish it from the truth, because the devil mixes up falsehood with truth. There is hardly a truth of the Catholic faith today that has not been called into question.

We have to be very careful indeed with ourselves and with those we are responsible for in the whole area of magazines, television, books and newspapers — all of which can be a real source of false doctrine. We have to be constantly watchful

and not let ourselves be caught off guard. For once false doctrine takes root in the soul, it creates lukewarmness and then estrangement from God.

We can draw other lessons from the parable.

For instance, the parable teaches us there is a hostile power at work in the world, seeking to destroy the good seed. We must forever be on guard, for our adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

It teaches us that it is hard to distinguish between a good and a bad person. Like the weeds and the wheat, both look alike in the beginning. Goodness and evil reside in the human heart. Only God can read the human heart. Therefore Christ said, "Judge not! Judgment is mine and I will repay."

It teaches us to be patient. Don't try to root out the weeds, that is, to write a person off. How often a bad person has changed at the very end of his life, like the good thief on the cross. How often sinners have become great saints, like Mary Magdalene.

It teaches us also that eventually there will be a judgment, but at the end of the world. I think it was Samuel Johnson who said that "God defers His judgment till the end of the world. Let us do likewise."

Francis Thompson in his "The Hound of Heaven" called God's love for us a

weed. "Ah! Is thy love indeed / A weed, albeit an amaranthine (meaning "deathless") weed, / Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?"

Thompson strips the weed of all its unpleasant connotation of worthlessness and uses it because of its prolificness, that makes all other growths impossible. You can't kill God's love for us anymore than you can get rid of weeds.

So this beautiful parable tells us two things: Judge not; in the end God will judge.

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Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, July 19

Exodus 14:5-18; Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday, July 20

Exodus 14:21-15:1;
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday, July 21

Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15;
Matthew 13:1-9

Thursday, July 22

Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20;
John 20:1-2, 11-18

Friday, July 23

Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday, July 24

Exodus 24:3-8; Matthew 13:24-30



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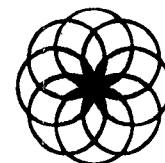
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