

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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From Weeds to Wheat: The Patient Love of God.

Today's Gospel presents three familiar Parables: *The Weeds among the Wheat*, *The Mustard Seed*, and *The Yeast*. Although different stories, they all proclaim one profound truth: God is extraordinarily patient, and His Kingdom grows through His Transformative Love.

The first parable may surprise us: A farmer sows good seed, but during the night, an enemy sows weeds among the wheat. When the servants discover the weeds, they immediately want to pull them out; but the master says: "Let both of them grow together until the harvest."

At first, this seems strange. Why would the master allow the weeds to remain? Because the master is *patient*.

This is not simply a farming lesson; it is the story of God's heart. God never gives up on us. He sees beyond who we are today and looks at who we can become through His grace. While human beings are often quick to judge, condemn, and uproot, God is slow to judge and eager to save. The astounding message of this parable is that those who appear to be "weeds" are still given time, mercy, and countless opportunities to become fruitful disciples. God's patience is not a weakness; it is an expression of His infinite love. St. Peter reminds us: "The Lord is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). In many ways, the entire Gospel is the story of God walking through the soil of human lives, searching for hearts that can be transformed.

Think of the Samaritan woman: society had written her off, but Jesus saw a missionary. She became the first evangelist of her village.

Think of Zacchaeus: others saw only a dishonest tax collector, but Jesus saw a generous disciple waiting to be awakened.



Think of the woman caught in adultery: others were ready to stone her, but Jesus restored her dignity and gave her a new beginning.

Think of Matthew, the tax collector; Peter, who denied the Lord; and Paul, who persecuted Christians. Each one could have been dismissed as a “weed”, yet the touch of Jesus transformed them into fruitful disciples who bore abundant fruit for the Kingdom.

Another example is the Good Thief: he lived a life that deserved punishment. As he hung beside Jesus as a condemned criminal, many would have only seen a hopeless man. However, Jesus saw a repentant heart. In the final moments of his life, one sincere prayer changed everything: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” To this, Jesus replied: “Today, you will be with me in Paradise.” The world saw a criminal, but Jesus saw a soul ready for salvation.

Perhaps the greatest miracle of Christianity is not that Jesus healed the blind or raised the dead. The greatest miracle is that He transformed sinners into saints.

Throughout the history of the Church, many sinners have become great saints. One of them is St. Augustine. For years he wandered far from God, searching for happiness in worldly pleasures, ambition, and false philosophies. Many might have judged him as a lost cause. However, God did not uproot him. God waited patiently. Through the persistent prayers of his mother, St. Monica, and the preaching of St. Ambrose, Augustine encountered Christ. The man who once wandered in darkness became one of the greatest theologians and saints in the history of the Church. His life and his legacy has nourished the Church for more than sixteen centuries.

St. Augustine primarily expounded on this concept in his *Sermon 23* on the New Testament (specifically commenting on Matthew 13). He also heavily integrated this exact theology into his literary masterpiece, *The City of God*. In this sermon, Augustine directly addresses the human urge to separate the good from the bad prematurely. He notes that people are impatient with the mixture of evil and good, but warns that many who are currently evil

will experience a "praiseworthy change" if given time. He preached: "Many are at first weeds and later become wheat. If these persons, when they are evil, were not tolerated patiently, they would never reach the praiseworthy change in their life." (*Quaestionum septemdecim in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, Question 12, section 4.) Augustine used the *Parable of the Weeds and Wheat* as the foundational framework for *The City of God*. In this book, he argues that the "City of God" (the wheat) and the "Earthly City" (the weeds) are completely tangled and intertwined in this present world. He emphasizes that the two cities must coexist until the final judgment, precisely because many citizens of the *Earthly City* will eventually become citizens of the *City of God* through conversion.

Before we ask: "Who are the weeds around me?", today's Gospel invites us to ask a more important question: "What still needs to be transformed within me?"

Each of us has areas in our lives where weeds still grow: pride, anger, jealousy, selfishness, unforgiveness, or indifference. Yet God has not abandoned us. Everyday, He gives us another opportunity to grow, to repent, and to bear fruit. At the same time, Jesus asks us not to become impatient judges of others. We often only see a person's present condition. God sees their potential and their future. We may see failure; God sees possibility. We may see weakness; God sees a saint in the making. As Pope Francis beautifully said: "God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking His mercy."

May we never lose confidence in God's patient love.

Let us allow Christ to continue transforming us and our lives. By God's grace, may we be converted and become fruitful disciples, bearing abundant fruit for the Kingdom of God.