

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A

[Wisdom 12:13, 16-19; Romans 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43]

Excerpts from Pope Francis - 23 July 2023

by Father Charles Fillion

19 July 2026

Brothers and sisters, today's Gospel continues to offer us another parable. And we are still on the farm, or in the garden. As we know very well, even though we have sown good seed in the field, or in the garden, we discover that an enemy by night has sown weeds in it, a plant that looks very similar to wheat, but is invasive. Of course, we know very well that there are other invasive weeds. Sometimes they are beautiful flowers. However, they can have negative impacts on how ecosystems function, on native vegetation, and native wildlife.

In this way, Jesus talks about our world, which in effect is like a *large field*, where God sows wheat and the evil one sows weeds, and therefore good and bad grow together. We see this in the news, in society, and even in the family and the Church. And when, along with the good wheat, we see bad weeds, we want to pull them up immediately. But every good gardener knows that as we try to destroy the bad, unfortunately some of the good is also destroyed.

Today the Lord warns us that to do this is a temptation: one cannot create a perfect world, and one cannot do good by hastily destroying what is bad, because this results in even worse effects. There is, however, a second field where we can clean up: it is *the field of our heart*, the only one where we can intervene directly. There, too, there are wheat and weeds. It is precisely from there that both expand into the great field of the world.

Brothers and sisters, our heart, in fact, is a field of freedom: it is not a sterile laboratory, but rather an open and therefore vulnerable space. To cultivate it properly, it is necessary on the one hand to take constant care of the delicate shoots of goodness, and on the other, to identify and uproot the weeds, at the right time. So let us look within a bit and examine what is happening, what is growing within me, what grows in me that is good and evil. There is a good method for this: it is called an examination of conscience, which is seeing what happened today in my life, what struck my heart and which decisions I made. And this is precisely to verify, in the light of God, where the bad weeds and the good seed are.

After the field of the world, and the field of the heart, there is a third field. We can call it *the neighbour's field*. They are the people we associate with every day, and whom we often judge. How easy it is to recognize their weeds, how we like to "criticize" others! And how difficult it is, instead, to know how to see the good grain that is growing!

Let us remember, though, that if we want to cultivate the fields of life, it is important to seek first and foremost the work of God: to learn to see the beauty of what the Lord has sown, the sun-kissed wheat with its golden ears, in others, in the world and in ourselves.

Brothers and sisters, it is not a naïve perspective; it is the perspective of one who believes, because God, the farmer of the great field of the world, loves to see goodness and to make it grow to make the harvest a feast!

So today too, we can ask ourselves some questions. Thinking of the *field of the world*: Do I know how to resist the temptation to generalize, to sweep others aside with my judgments?

Then, thinking of the *field of the heart*: Am I honest in seeking out the bad weeds in myself, and decisive in throwing them into the fire of God's mercy?

And, thinking of the *neighbour's field*: Do I have the wisdom to see what is good without being discouraged by the limitations and sluggishness of others?

May this Eucharist help us to cultivate patiently what the Lord sows in the field of life, in my field, in the neighbour's, in everyone's field.