



LIVING THE GOSPEL

Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
July 19, 2026

Theme: "Listen, anyone who has ears!"

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: Show favor, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith, and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:24-43

²⁴ "He put another parable before them, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. ²⁶ When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. ²⁷ The owner's servants went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?' ²⁸ 'Some enemy has done this,' he answered. And the servants said, 'Do you want us to go and weed it out?' ²⁹ But he said, 'No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. ³⁰ Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat into my barn.'"

³¹ He put another parable before them, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable, "The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through." ³⁴ In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. ³⁵ This was to fulfil the prophecy: I will speak to you in parables and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.

³⁶ Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to him and said, "Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us." ³⁷ He said in reply, "The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world; the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil one; ³⁹ the enemy who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels.

⁴⁰ Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offenses and all who do evil, ⁴² and throw them into the

blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. ⁴³ Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!

Gospel Focus

Jesus gives the crowds three more parables this week: the parable of the weeds, the parable of the mustard seed, and the parable of the leaven. These parables all use imagery familiar to the crowds, each beginning to unravel the mystery of the kingdom of God. After Jesus gives his disciples an explanation of the first parable, he warns them using the same phrase we heard last week: "Whoever has ears ought to hear." As we see in the other two parables this Sunday, the kingdom of God is already present in initial form, growing into an incredible degree. However, that time of growth will come to an end. God and his angels will gather the righteous, that they might "shine like the sun" with God in heaven. The disciples of Jesus have a real choice to make: Do they hear the word of God, or do they ignore it?

Gospel Reflection

What to do when weeds are discovered sprouting among the good grain? Do you pull out the destructive intruders or let them grow? How did they get there? And who or what were the "weeds" in the minds of early Christians who heard this parable? Were they Gentiles who were infiltrating with their corrosive influences? Were they evildoers in general or persecutors of the followers of Jesus? Why is the evil one still exercising power?

Today's gospel opens myriad questions and gives helpful directions toward finding answers. The householder who sowed the good seed first acknowledges that the weeds are the work of an enemy and takes the onus off the worried slaves who might have been blamed for not tending the field well or for sowing inferior seed. The parable focuses more on what to do than explaining how it happened.

One line of response proposed by the slaves is to pull up all the weeds immediately. The landowner decides against this course of action. Pulling up the weeds might uproot the wheat along with them. The separation can happen later at harvest time.

Is this a wise decision? Are the ones who actually work the land thinking that this absentee landlord doesn't know anything about farming? Will his approach be shown to be unrealistic when his wheat has been choked out by the weeds and when it proves impossible to sort out darnel from wheat by winnowing?

Authoritative voices in the early church agreed with the householder and urged forbearance towards sinners. Saint Augustine, for example, used this parable to argue that heretics or the lapsed should not be cut off from the church, contrary to the position of the Donatists. Around the same time, Pope Callistus I likewise interpreted "Let tares grow along with the wheat" as "Let sinners remain in the church."

If the parable proper (vv. 24-30) reflects struggles of the early Christians to include as full participants Gentiles and other "sinners," the allegorical explanation (vv. 36-43) points outside the Christian community to "the world" (v.38) as the ground of conflict. In these verses, the patient forbearance of the householder is gone as the end-time judgment, and the action is carried out by God's angels, not human beings. There is an implicit warning to us not to impetuously assume the role of the divine judge, who alone sorts out good from

evil.

The non-retaliatory reproach of the householder who has been humiliated by his enemy can seem weak. The brief parable of the yeast, also included in today's gospel, speaks instead of the womanly strength of God, whose transformative work is hidden in the agitating action of kneading the bread. With the first reading from Wisdom, it points to divine justice and might become manifest in leniency, clemency and kindness. It is this paradoxical approach to rooting out evil, exemplified in Jesus' boundless forgiveness and inclusive table practices, that we are offered.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

¹³ For there is no god, other than you, who cares for everything. ¹⁶ Your justice has its source in strength, your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all. ¹⁷ You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned and you expose the insolence of those who know it; ¹⁸ but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgment, you govern us with great lenience, for you have only to will, and your power is there. ¹⁹ By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people how the virtuous man must be kindly his fellow men, and you have given your sons the good hope that after sin you will grant repentance.

Responsorial Reading — Psalms 65: 9-13

R: Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon you. Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my pleading. **(R)**

All the nations you have made shall come and worship you, O Lord, and glorify your name. For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; you alone are God. **(R)**

You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity. Turn toward me, and have pity on me; give your strength to your servant. **(R)**

Second Reading — Romans 8: 26-27

²⁶ The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, ²⁷ and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

333. From the Incarnation to the Ascension, the life of the Word incarnate is surrounded by the adoration and service of angels. When God "brings the firstborn into the world, he says: 'Let all God's angels worship him.'"(Heb 1:6) Their song of praise at the birth of Christ has not ceased resounding in the Church's praise: "Glory to God in the highest!"(Lk 2:14) They protect Jesus in his infancy, serve him in the desert, strengthen him in his agony in the garden, when he could have been saved by them

from the hands of his enemies as Israel had been.(Cf. Mt 1:20; 2:13,19; 4:11; 26:53; Mk 1:13; Lk 22:43; 2 Macc 10:29-30; 11:8) Again, it is the angels who "evangelize" by proclaiming the Good News of Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection.(Cf. Lk 2:8-14; Mk 16:5-7) They will be present at Christ's return, which they will announce, to serve at his judgement.(Cf. Acts 1:10-11; Mt 13:41; 24:31; Lk 12:8-9. The angels in the life of the Church)

827. "Christ, 'holy, innocent, and undefiled,' knew nothing of sin, but came only to expiate the sins of the people. The Church, however, clasping sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal."(LG 8 § 3; Cf. UR 3; 6; Heb 2:17; 726; 2 Cor 5:21) All members of the Church, including her ministers, must acknowledge that they are sinners.(Cf. 1 Jn 1:8-10) In everyone, the weeds of sin will still be mixed with the good wheat of the Gospel until the end of time.(Cf. Mt 13:24-30) Hence the Church gathers sinners already caught up in Christ's salvation but still on the way to holiness:

The Church is therefore holy, though having sinners in her midst, because she herself has no other life but the life of grace. If they live her life, her members are sanctified; if they move away from her life, they fall into sins and disorders that prevent the radiation of her sanctity. This is why she suffers and does penance for those offenses, of which she has the power to free her children through the blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.(Paul VI, CPG § 19)

1034. Jesus often speaks of "Gehenna" of "the unquenchable fire" reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost.(Cf. Mt 5:22, 29; 10:28; 13:42, 50; Mk 9:43-48) Jesus solemnly proclaims that he "will send his angels, and they will gather . . . all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire,"(Mt 13:41-42) and that he will pronounce the condemnation: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!"(Mt 25:41)

Sharing and Discussion

1. The owner's servants went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?'
 - a. What are darnels in the world today? Who sows them?
 - b. What are the dangers associated with the presence of darnels?
2. What are the lessons for us in the following parables?
 - a. The mustard seed.
 - b. Yeast.

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, you reveal yourself in the word and sacrament so that we may grow in holiness. Hear our prayers this day that we might humbly accept the invitation to your kingdom and more fully embrace your ways of love and mercy. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Facilitator: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen