

16TH SUNDAY OF THE REAR

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19 Romans 8:26-27 — Matthew 13: 24-43

GIVING US TIME TO GROW

Right at the time of Jesus there were people who wanted him to separate the bad from the good.

PHARISEES

Among them were the Pharisees: these were people who prided in upholding a high moral ground.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

But only the pharisees wanted Jesus to separate the bad from the good! Even John the Baptist expected Jesus to separate the cream from the skim, to have only holy people around him.

John foretold that Our Lord would separate the chaff from the wheat.

- He said (Mt 3:12) *“He will gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.”*

When he saw that Jesus was not doing this, from prison JB sent his messengers to ask ***“Are you the one we were expecting or do we have to wait for another?”***

JB sent this message because he was disappointed to see that Jesus was not at all separating the good from the bad.

On the contrary Jesus was known to be interacting with tax-collectors, prostitutes, the lot.

Q: What, in God’s name is he doing, the pharisees and JB said to themselves?

As a good gardener knows, weeding can be the greatest threat of all to the life of the young seedling.

- a. At first, the problem is one of identifying which is which.
 - ❖ The weeds must be left until the seedling can be clearly recognised.

- b. Moreover pulling out the weeds brings the seedling away with it.

In the case of human beings even recent history has proved that weeding is far more risky business.

- a) “Weeding-out” does not have a history of success.
 - Think of the horrendous weeding out of the six million Jews in concentration camps.

- Think of the Bosnian Serbs and even the Rwandan genocide attempting the brutal policy of “ethnic cleansing.”
- What about the unborn child, the seed of human life who is being weeded out with abortion?
- At the other end of life, euthanasia is proposed as the final solution for the ‘**new Jews**’: the old, the maimed, the incurables and the burdensome.
- Right through life, the weeding-out continues without remorse.

You will be surprised to find out the people who might have been weeded out if God was bent on the weeding out policy.

- ❖ Probably most of the saints in the calendar: St Augustine would have been weeded out.
- ❖ Certainly Peter, after his triple denial as well as Paul after attacking the followers of Christ would have been weeded out
- ❖ Strange enough that Christ never weeded out Judas?

The church has, however, not always shown her master’s tolerance.

- Galileo could testify to that.
- Excommunications and anathemas may be out of fashion, but old habits die hard.

The parable of the weeds is starkly simple and yet widely ignored.

- ❖ To the question ***“Do you want us to go and weed it out?”*** the answer of Jesus is a categorical ***“No.”***

And the reason is self-evident.

- ❖ God is giving us a chance to grow.
- ❖ Moreover, only God has eyes sufficiently discerning and fingers sufficiently gentle for this job. Weeding out is God’s prerogative.
- ❖ Life would be so much better for everybody, if only we would leave it to him.