

Tuesday Reflection 27 July 2021

In today's Gospel, Jesus explains the parable of the wheat field infested with darnel - a plant that closely resembles wheat. When the workers ask whether they should rip out the darnel, the lord of the harvest tells them to wait until the harvest is gathered in lest in the workers' zeal they destroy the good wheat.

The parable is clearly about the Last Judgement and that it is ultimately the God of Compassion and Mercy who passes judgement, but it can also be taken as a warning against excessive zealousness on the part of those who imagine they are doing God's work, and then later turn out to have been on the wrong side. A classic example of this is the Apostle Paul, who, before his own conversion, persecuted the early Christians and is reported to have been present at the stoning of Stephen. A couple of weeks ago we were looking at those early translators of the Bible into English who were persecuted for their work, but without whose pioneering example we would probably have been unable to read the Scriptures for ourselves today.

Very often, of course the appeal to "God's will" was a hypocritical cloak to conceal the interests of worldly power, whether it was Henry the Eighth's execution of Thomas More or the rearguard action against the canonisation of Oscar Romero.

It does not even have to be the actual physical destruction; staying with the agricultural theme, we think of the parable of the sower and remember the many who are deprived of the fertile soil they need to prosper and flourish by the few who are more concerned to preserve and further their own privilege and power. Faced with this situation, we might wonder who is the wheat and who the darnel.

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