

Mt 13:24-43; Wis 12:13, 16-19; Rom 8:26-27 Cross of Mercy

In the parable, Jesus, like the farmer, sows the seed of God's Word which produces the children of God, like wheat that bring life into the world.

But the enemy Satan, sows the seed of sin, which produce children of the devil, like weeds that bring death and choke life out of the world.

How shocked the servants must have felt, when the farmer said no. Let them grow. *If you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them* (Mt 13:29). *Let them grow together until harvest* (Mt 13:30).

Then at the end of times, the angels will throw *all who cause others to sin and all evildoers...into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth* (Mt 13:41-42).

Yes, the devil is real. And yes, there is a hell!

The Church teaches: *To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice...*

*This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell"* (CCC 1033). ...Separated from God forever!

But why wait. Why not pull up the weeds and destroy the wicked now? Because God in His mercy, does not want *any to perish, but all to come to repentance* (CCC 1037; 2 Pet 3:9).

We saw that in the first reading. God is patient and forgives us our sins (Wis 12:19). He is a god of mercy and compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love and truth (Ps 86:15).

Isn't that great? God doesn't give up on us. None of us are perfect. There are both wheat and weeds in each of us.

So, God waits. Because God believes and hopes in the goodness of a person and patiently gives us time to change and grow for the better...so the weeds can become wheat!

That is our calling. We were made in His image. And we have been sent into this world to do His will and thereby give glory to God.

How? With a godlike heart--a patient heart, a forgiving heart, and most of all a loving heart.

That means living in the Spirit of God. In the second reading, St. Paul says, admit it, we are weak, we make mistakes, and we fall into sin.

But that does not define us. The Spirit of God enables and empowers us to pray and to do the will of God (Rom 8:26-27). And that...is the mercy of God!

That means, the weeds in us and the weeds in sinners all around us, are an opportunity to turn weeds into wheat. How? By the mercy of God .

How do we overcome sin and turn weeds into wheat? Not by will power. But by virtue...a virtue we call: *Fear of the Lord*. That means loving God so much that we don't dare do anything that might offend Him.

Can we do that? Yes, we can--by the power of His mercy!

So call upon His mercy: His cross of mercy whereby He said, *father forgive them for they know not what they do* (Lk 23:34).

Call upon His mercy: His cross of mercy whereby He said to the repentant thief: *today you will be with me in paradise* (Lk 23:43).

And call upon His mercy: His cross of mercy on which we behold:

*Jesus Christ, who though he was in the form of God...emptied himself...coming in human likeness...he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross* (Phil 2:6-8)...

...for the forgiveness of our sins and for our salvation!

Receive the power of His mercy. Make His mercy your mercy. Then let's prove it!

Like St. Paul once said: *Never act out of selfishness or vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each of you looking to others interests rather than his own* (Phil 2:3-4).

*In everything you do...prove yourselves...children of God beyond reproach in the midst of a twisted and depraved generation—among whom you shine like the stars in the sky while holding fast to the word of life* (Phil 2:14-16).

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, let me feel your mercy when I receive You in Holy Communion. Let me feel your mercy when You forgive my sins.

And let me feel your mercy when I am always praying *Lord Jesus Son of God have mercy on me a sinner.*

May your patience become my patience. May your compassion become my compassion. And may Your mercy become my mercy.

Because the stone which the builders rejected has become my cornerstone (Ps 118:22).

And how wonderful it is--that I live no longer I, but Jesus Christ—patient, kind and forgiving--who lives in me (Gal 2:20).