

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time- A: ***The Justice and Mercy of our God***: Wis:13, 16-19; Rom 8:26-27; Mat 13:24-43

Today, the Church turns our attention to **the Lord, the Just Judge**, who, through His infinite mercy, calls us into His Kingdom. She also reminds us that **Christ and the Holy Spirit accompany us on our journey toward God's Kingdom of justice and peace**. As the Psalmist proclaims, "**The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love**" (Ps 145:8).

In the **first reading**, the Book of Wisdom presents one of the most beautiful descriptions of God. It extols Him as the **perfectly just Judge**: "**There is no god besides you who has the care of all... Though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us**". God's justice is never separated from His mercy. Unlike human justice, which often seeks punishment, God's justice always seeks **conversion and restoration**. Wisdom reminds us: "**You gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins**" (Wis 12:19). This is the very nature of our God. In His mercy, He pardons us, forgives us, and continually offers us new opportunities to begin again. As the prophet Ezekiel declares: "**I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live**" (Ezek 33:11). What must we learn from this? Quite simply, **since God, in His justice, shows us mercy—which is His grace—we too must show mercy to others**. As today's first reading teaches, "**Those who are just must be kind**" (cf. Wis 12:19). Jesus Himself says: "**Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful**" (Lk 6:36). This is a call to take advantage of God's mercy through repentance and to imitate His compassionate way of judging others. Instead of condemning people, we are called to forgive, encourage, and lead them toward God.

In the **second reading**, St. Paul highlights one of the most comforting ministries of the **Holy Spirit**. "**The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought**". Indeed, we are weak in many ways, especially in prayer. There are moments when pain, confusion, disappointment, or grief leave us without words. At such times, the Holy Spirit becomes our Advocate. He strengthens us in prayer and intercedes for us before the Father. Paul beautifully assures us: "**The Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings**". And because "**God searches hearts**", He understands perfectly the prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:27). What a comforting truth! Even when we cannot pray, the Holy Spirit is praying within us.

In today's **Gospel**, Jesus gives us three parables about the Kingdom of God. Among them, the **parable of the wheat and the weeds** beautifully reveals both **God's**

justice and His mercy. Like the Parable of the Sower, we may wonder: **What good farmer would allow weeds to grow together with the wheat?** The servants wanted to pull out the weeds immediately. But the master replied: **"Let both grow together until the harvest"** (Mt 13:30). To human thinking, this seems risky. Yet God knows what He is doing. From the beginning, God did not create one world for saints and another for sinners. Instead, He allows both to live together. This is not because He approves of evil, but because **His mercy gives every sinner the opportunity to repent.** As St. Peter reminds us: **"The Lord is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"** (2 Pet 3:9).

This "dangerous coexistence" also has its benefits. The righteous see the consequences of sin and strive to remain faithful. Sinners, seeing the goodness and peace of those who live according to God's will, may be inspired to change their lives. However, while living in this world, we must remember St. Paul's warning: **"Though we live in the world, we do not wage war according to worldly ways"** (2 Cor 10:3). And again: **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind"** (Rom 12:2). Our struggle is not against people but against sin. We overcome evil not by hatred but by goodness, as Paul teaches: **"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"** (Rom 12:21). The wheat survives because it remains deeply rooted. Likewise, Christians remain faithful through the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus assures us: **"Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit"** (Jn 15:5).

Therefore, the parable of the wheat and the weeds teach us that **God is both perfectly just and infinitely merciful.** At the end of time, there will indeed be a harvest, and Christ, the Just Judge, will separate good from evil (Mt 13:40-43). Until then, God patiently waits for our conversion. The Book of Revelation proclaims: **"Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for His judgments are true and just"** (Rev 19:1-2).

As we continue this Eucharist, let us thank God for His justice that never forgets mercy, and His mercy that never ignores justice. May Christ strengthen us, may the Holy Spirit intercede for us, and may we become instruments of God's compassion in our families, our parish, and our world. **May God give us the grace to be both merciful and just in all our dealings with others, so that one day we may be gathered as good wheat into His everlasting Kingdom. Amen**