Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:24-43): Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'"

He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.

Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples

approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

"An enemy has done this"

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Today, Christ. Always, Christ. From Him we come; from Him come all the good seeds sown in our life. The "Kempis" says that God visits us with consolation and desolation, with sweet and bitter taste, with flower and thorn, with cold and heat, with beauty and suffering, with joy and sadness, with courage and fear... because everything has been redeemed in Christ (He too was afraid and overcame it). Saint Paul also tells us, "We know that all things work for good for those who love God " (Rom 8:28).

All of this is fine, but... there is a mystery of iniquity that does not come from God and that surpasses us and devastates the Church, God's Garden. And we would like God to be "somewhat" more powerful, to be more present, that He would be more demanding and would not let these distressing forces in: "Do you want us to go and pull them up [the weeds]?" (Mt 13:28).

Pope Saint John Paul II said this in his book Memory and Identity: "We patiently suffer the mercy of God", who waits until the last moment to offer salvation to all souls, especially the most in need of His mercy: "Let them grow together until

harvest” Mt 13:30. And as He is the Lord of our lives and of all mankind, He moves the threads of our existences while respecting our freedom. And along with our afflictions, we are supplied with overabundant grace to overcome them, to sanctify ourselves, to go towards Him, to be a permanent offering, to grow the Kingdom.

Christ, the divine pedagogue, introduces us to His school of life through each encounter, each event. He comes our way; He tells us — Take courage, I have conquered the world. I am with you always, until the end of the age (cf. Jn 16:33; Mt 28:20). He also tells us: —Do not judge; rather —like me— wait, trust, pray for those who err, sanctify them as members who interest you greatly because they are of your own body.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "For it is Christ who gives the yeast that virtue. Therefore, let no one complain about their smallness, for the dynamism of preaching is enormous, and what has once fermented becomes ferment for others" (St. John Chrysostom)
- “Evil does not have the first nor the last word. In facing weeds in the world the Lord’s disciple is called to imitate the patience of God, to nourish hope with the support of indestructible trust in the final victory of good, that is, of God.” (Francis)
- "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." All members of the Church, including her ministers, must acknowledge that they are sinners.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N. 827)