

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today's Word of God reveals one of the most beautiful qualities of our God: His mercy, His patience, and His unwavering hope in every one of us. We worship a God who never gives up on His children. Even when we fail, even when we fall into sin, God does not immediately condemn us. Instead, He gives us another chance, and another, because He believes that His grace can transform our lives.

In the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, we hear these comforting words: "Your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all." God's power is not shown by punishment but by mercy. Unlike human beings who are often quick to judge and slow to forgive, God is slow to anger and rich in compassion. His justice is always accompanied by His love. That is why we joyfully prayed in today's Responsorial Psalm: "Lord, you are good and forgiving." This is the God we believe in—not a God who delights in punishment, but a loving Father who patiently waits for His children to return home.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us the familiar parable of the wheat and the weeds. The servants immediately wanted to pull out the weeds, but the master replied, "No. Let them grow together until harvest." Why? Because the master knows something the servants do not. Sometimes what looks like a weed today may become fruitful tomorrow. That is exactly how God looks at us. Many of us can look back on our own lives and admit that there were moments when we made poor choices. There were times we wandered away from God. There were times we hurt others or disappointed our families. Yet God did not abandon us. He patiently waited for us, spoke to our hearts, forgave us in Confession, strengthened us through the Eucharist, and slowly transformed us.

If God had judged us only by our worst moments, where would we be today? That is why today's Gospel is filled with hope. It reminds us that God gives every sinner the opportunity to become a saint. Look at the people Jesus chose. Peter denied Him three times. Thomas doubted. James and John argued about who would be the greatest. Matthew had been a tax collector. Even among the Twelve, there were weaknesses and failures. Yet Jesus did not give up on them. He saw beyond their failures. He saw what they could become through grace. And most of them became courageous witnesses and saints.

Dear friends, this is also true in our own families. Perhaps someone we love has drifted away from the Church. Perhaps one of our children no longer prays. Perhaps a husband or wife has become indifferent to God. Perhaps someone has hurt us deeply. We may be tempted to label them as "lost," as hopeless, or as beyond saving. But today's Gospel tells us: Never give up on anyone because God has not given up on them. If there is life, there is hope. If there is breath, there is room for conversion. As long as God's mercy remains available, no one is beyond His reach.

The second reading gives us another beautiful assurance. St. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. Notice he does not say that only the strong receive God's help. He says the Spirit helps us precisely in our weakness. How comforting that is! Sometimes we struggle with the same sins. Sometimes we become discouraged because we think we are not improving. Sometimes we do

not even know how to pray. Yet God does not become tired of us. The Holy Spirit continues praying within us, strengthening us little by little, leading us back whenever we fall.

Brothers and sisters, Today's Gospel also invites us to examine ourselves. Before asking who, the weeds are around us, Jesus gently asks us to look into our own hearts. The truth is that each of us carries both wheat and weeds. There is kindness, but also impatience. There is generosity, but also selfishness. There is faith but sometimes doubt. There is love, but sometimes resentment. The Christian life is allowing God, day by day, to remove the weeds from our hearts so that the wheat may grow stronger. It is much easier to criticize others than to convert ourselves. It is easier to notice another person's faults than our own. But Jesus reminds us today that judgment belongs to God alone. Our mission is not to condemn but to love. Not to uproot people but to help them grow. Not to close doors but to open hearts.

One of the greatest signs that we have truly encountered God's mercy is that we ourselves become merciful. A forgiven person learns to forgive. A loved person learns to love. A patient God teaches us to become patient with others. Dear brothers and sisters, Our parish should be a place where people encounter hope, not condemnation. May every person who enters this church feel that they are welcomed by Christ. May those burdened by sin discover forgiveness. May those who have fallen find encouragement to stand again. May those who have lost hope discover that God's mercy is greater than their failures.

Finally, let us remember this simple truth: God is still working in every one of us. None of us is yet the finished product. We are all growing. We are all being transformed. We are all living under God's patient love. So let us never lose hope in ourselves. Let us never lose hope in our families. Let us never lose hope in those who seem far from God. Because the God who changed Peter can change us. The God who forgave the prodigal son can forgive us. The God who raised Jesus from the dead can bring new life even to hearts that seem spiritually dead. May we leave this church today grateful that God has been patient with us, and determined to show that same patience, compassion, and mercy to others. For in the end, it is not our judgment that saves the world. It is the mercy of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Amen.