

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

Wisdom 12:13, 16-191

Neither is there any God besides you, whose care is for all, to whom you should prove that you have not judged unjustly.

For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all.

For you show your strength when men doubt the completeness of your power, and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it.

You are sovereign in strength but you judge with mildness, and with great forbearance you govern us; for you have power to act whenever you choose.

Through such works you have taught your people that the one who is righteous must be kind, and you have filled your sons with good hope, because you give repentance for sins.

PSALM

Ps 86(85):5-6. 9-10. 15-16a.
℟ 5a

℟ O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to my voice in supplication. *℟*

All the nations you have made shall come; they will bow down before you, O Lord, and glorify your name, for you are great and do marvellous deeds, you who alone are God. *℟*

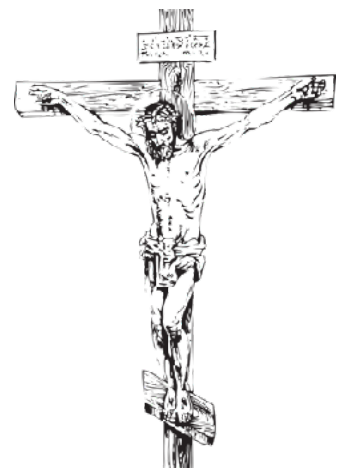
You, O God, are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, O Lord, abundant in mercy and fidelity; turn and take pity on me. *℟*

℟ O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:26-27

Brothers and Sisters: The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia...

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children. **Alleluia...**

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:24-43

At that time: Jesus put another parable before the crowd, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?"' He said to them, "An enemy has done this." So the servants said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he said, "No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.' " ' "

He put another parable before them, saying, 'The

kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

He told them another parable. 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened.'

All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet: 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.'

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather

out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.'

REFLECTION

Why does evil remain if God's Kingdom has come? Jesus answers with the parable of the wheat and the weeds. The temptation is to separate good from evil immediately, but God is patient. As St John Chrysostom observes, uprooting the weeds too soon may also damage the wheat. God's mercy gives time for repentance.

St Augustine reminds us that this is true even within the Church. Until the final judgement, saints and sinners grow together. It is not for us to pronounce the final verdict on others; that belongs to Christ alone.

The mustard seed and the yeast remind us that God's Kingdom often grows quietly and almost unnoticed. As Origen teaches, faith begins small but, if nurtured, transforms the whole person. Our task is simply to remain faithful and trust that God will bring His harvest to perfection.

Church Fathers: St John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew 46; St Augustine, Sermon 73; Origen, Commentary on Matthew.