

The Parables of Jesus—Part 2 (16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19—The Lord is Just and Merciful

1. Righteousness and Omnipotence: God is perfectly just (12:13) and almighty (12:16-17)
2. Merciful: God forgives sins (12:19)

Psalm 86—Lord, You are Good and Forgiving

1. The Lord is “good” and “forgiving,” abound in “steadfast love/mercy” (Hebrew *hesed*)

Romans 8:26-27—We Do Not Know How to Pray as We Ought

1. The Spirit “intercedes for the saints” or “holy ones” (Greek *hagioi*)

Matthew 13:24-43—Weeds, Wheat, Mustard Seed, and Yeast

1. Continuation of the Parables Discourse (Matthew 13)
2. The Weeds and Wheat (13:24-30)
 - a. Sower: a man sowed seed in his field
 - b. Enemy: sowed “weeds among the wheat”
 - c. Servants: “How” are there “Weeds”?
 - d. Twist: “*Do you want us to go and gather them?*”
 - e. Meaning: the kingdom on earth is a “mixed bag” (Latin *corpus mixtum*)
3. Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)
 - a. Twist 1: a man “sowed” mustard seed in his field?
 - b. Mustard Seed: “smallest of all seeds”
 - c. Twist 2: “becomes a tree”? (10 ft?; cf. Ezek 17:22-24; 31:1-3; Dan 4:12)
 - d. Meaning: the kingdom starts small, ends great; doesn’t *look* like a kingdom!
4. Woman and the Leaven (13:33)
 - a. Twist 1: “kingdom of heaven” like “leaven”? (cf. Matt 16:5-12; 1 Cor 5:7-8)
 - b. 3 Measures: about 50 lbs
 - c. Meaning: starts small ends big; kingdom mysteriously transforms the unclean
5. Jesus and the Parables: uttering “hidden” mysteries (13:34-35; cf. Ps 78:2)
6. Weeds and the Wheat Explanation: Disciples: “Explain to us” the parable... (13:36-43)
 - a. Sower = Son of man
 - b. Field = the world
 - c. Good Seed = sons of the kingdom → Shine like the Sun (Kingdom)
 - d. Weeds = sons of the evil one → Thrown into Furnace (Hell)
 - e. Enemy Sower = the devil
 - f. Harvest = end of the age (cf. Matt 25:31-46, Final Judgment)
 - g. Reapers = angels (cf. ‘Grim Reaper’)
 - h. Riddle: “he who has ears, let him hear!”

The Catechism on the Parables of Jesus

1. The Church: “at once holy and always in need of purification” (*Lumen Gentium* 8.3)

In everyone, the weeds of sin will still be mixed with the good wheat of the Gospel until the end of time. (CCC 827)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (16th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. Can you pick out the “twist” in each of Jesus’ parables? How does each “twist” help unlock the “secrets” that Jesus says are hidden in the parables of the kingdom?

2. Have you ever grown a garden? Is it a good idea to allow the weeds to grow up alongside the plants you wish to harvest? If not, why not? The *Catechism* says that sin and holiness will always be mixed in the Church on earth; can you think of any reasons why a good and almighty in his providence *allows* the Church to be such a “mixed bag” while here on earth?

3. Review the *Catechism’s* teachings on the Kingdom of God and the parables (CCC 543-546). Does this section give you any insights into why the kingdom is a ‘mystery’?

For Further Study

1. CCC 543-546: The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God.
2. St. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* (trans. Thomas P. Scheck; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), pp. 156-63. A readable translation of one of the most ancient commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew; written by a Father and Doctor of the Church.