



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



## 16<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE A

Fr. David Rosenberg

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*"...if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest." Matt 13:30*

In this week's Gospel we first hear the parable of the weeds and wheat. Then Jesus tells us two more brief parables of the mustard seed and yeast, and a commentary for His reasons for teaching in parables.

Unlike human beings who tend to judge quickly, God is lenient and patient. The weeds and wheat parable reflects Jesus' own experience in the face of condemnation for associating with "the weeds," the social outcasts. It says very clearly that Jesus' notion of the Kingdom of God on earth is a challenge to our less tolerant views.

In February of 2015, Pope Francis gave a homily relating the need for our Church to be likened to a field hospital. He said, *"The thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. You have to heal wounds. Then we can talk about everything else."*

Theologians teach that our Church is "One Complex Reality" or "OCR" for short. On the one hand, the mystical Body of Christ is referred to as the Vertical Church. Image the vertical rise of the cross. Firmly grounded into the earth, and rising to pierce the heavens, the Vertical Church is perfect. Referring back to the parable, this is the wheat in the field.

The Vertical Church in Her perfection, through the Trinity, Mary, the Mother of the Church, and all the angels and saints, are the "doctors" and "nurses" in what Pope Francis calls the field hospital, which tends to the imperfect Horizontal Church. Image the horizontal bar of the cross, where Jesus stretches out His hands to a broken world, reaching and connecting with all humans, the broken castaways, the *weeds*, if you will that need healing and transformation.

The imperfect Horizontal Church is what the world sees and judges as hypocritical. It would be easy to vilify them, but they are a part of us, connected through the Mystical Body of Christ. We are all one in this world. We are all in need of healing. We are all called by Christ to have our spiritual sight restored, to be able to take in the breathtaking skyward vistas and glorious heavenly nature of the mystical Vertical Church.

Most prominent in this "OCR" reality is where the vertical and horizontal meet. Centered there is the pierced heart of Jesus, where water flows into the world's baptismal fonts, bringing the healing waters of baptism. Also flowing from His pierced side is blood, His human blood, His fleshy connection to each and every person ever created. His heart speaks to your heart, my heart, all hearts. Reflect on the Latin phrase, *Cor ad Cor Loquitur* – Heart speaking to Heart. Christ's fleshy heart speaking to your fleshy heart.

We are called to live "OCR" lives, as we grow in holiness, even as we sin every day, praying to have *enfleshed* within our stony hearts the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Taking on the mantle of His divine mercy, we tend the wounds of the "weeds" in the world, even still as our wounds are tended through the grace of the sacraments and love of Christ flowing into our "OCR" Community.

*"I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender heart." Ezekiel 36:26-27*

**A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew**

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."*