

2014

- It's interesting to note that, in the original language, the weeds in our Gospel parable are not just any ol' weed, but are a grain (called "tares") that looks like wheat, but is bitter and poisonous.
- What do weeds do? They sap the life from the good plant, and may eventually kill it.
- And that's an image that Jesus wants to drive home to us today, because in every day and age various things are taught as "truth", but are poisonous to the soul.
- One of the most dangerous in our own day is the teaching that there IS no absolute truth: "You have your truth, I have my truth."
- Well...imagine trying to teach well-proven principles of mathematics and someone says: "Well, that's your truth; I have my truth!" Isn't even the idea ridiculous?
- By the way, kids...don't try that at school; you may discover the immutable truth of an "F" on your homework.
- But God IS, and He is truth. What He teaches IS truth. There is no truth apart from God.
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- Jesus' parable today reminds us that evil and false teaching is always lurking to trip up the faithful.
- St. Paul warns us many times of this. He gets exasperated with the Galatians when he writes them: "*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel -- not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed... the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*" (Gal 1:6-12)
- This IS, by the way, the Gospel which our Catholic Church teaches.
- And if you ever wonder about something "new", remember the letter to the Hebrews: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings...*" (Heb 13:8-9).

- And St. Paul warns us of: “...*false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ...Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*”(2 Cor 11:13-14)
- Ol’ Satan. Old Scratch. The original traitor and ingrate...called the deceiver, the tempter, the father of lies, the evil one, the enemy... always trying to lead us away from God out of his hatred for us... because we are elevated above him.
- It is said that Satan’s greatest victory is convincing the world that he does not exist.
- He is the deceiver who has led the world to denial of God—so that Man considers *himself* as god. Ah, vanity.
- Thus people like to make jokes about Satan... cartoons ...laugh... “the devil made me do it.” Ha, ha...isn’t that funny.
- Such jesting diminishes the danger which Satan presents, relegating him to the status of a myth or superstition...which is what he wants.
- But Satan...demons...the fallen angels—their existence is a doctrine of our Catholic faith.
- Jesus... God...spoke of Satan many times as a definite reality... calling him “*the prince of darkness*”...just as Jesus speaks of the reality of Satan in our Gospel today.
- We should not obsess over Satan; it is unnecessary, because he can do nothing without God allowing him to do it.
- The Catechism tells us: “*The power of Satan is...not infinite. He is only a creature...powerful from the fact that he is pure spirit, but still a creature...It is a great mystery that providence should permit diabolical activity, BUT, [quoting St. Paul] “...we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him.” (CCC 395; Rom 8:28)*
- Satan tempts us to worship HIM, but in the words of St. Gregory Nanzianzen say to him: “*I... [like you] have been made in the image of God, and [yet] I have not like you been cast down from heaven on account of my pride. I have put on Christ...by baptism...It is for YOU [Satan] to bend the knee before ME!”*

- Satan’s power is limited to influencing us through our imaginations —temptations of pride and wealth and lust and power.
  - But as St. Paul tells us: *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God...will not let you be tempted beyond your strength....*” (1 Cor 10:12)
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- Like the weeds and wheat in the parable, because of conflicting noise and teachings in the world, we may find it hard to know what God wants of us.
- And thus we rely on our sure teacher, the Church...she who by the promise of Christ is led always by the Holy Spirit.
  
- Now this week is National Natural Family Planning (NFP) week, in which the Church in her love for God and for her children seeks to emphasize holiness in marriage and in the marital embrace.
- Especially with all the controversy about the Affordable Care Act requiring coverage of birth control, it’s certainly no secret that the Church teaches what she has taught for 2000 years—that contraception in any form is against the will of God.
- And so, in this week, she wants to emphasize and encourage the use of the natural and God-designed method of spacing births between children—natural family planning—which works simply by determining the periods of fertility of the woman and exercising continence during those times...which is, by the way; as much as, or even more, effective than birth control.
- With NFP you respect the totality and dignity of your spouse... not actively trying to thwart God’s will, but working with what He gives us naturally. NFP respects that incomparable gift of the ability to give new life...to be “co-creators” of new little images of God.
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- Yes, it does require self-control during those times.
- No, I’m not married...but I’m not dead.
- It’s like when the young monk asked the wise old monk:  
*“O Venerable Father, when does the sexual desire finally die and leave us in peace?” “Three days after you’re dead, kid.”*

- So I can imagine the difficulty, for men at least...lying next to the soft smoothness of your beautiful wife and yet refraining.
- But to love a person is to will the best for that person...and there is nothing better or more important than following God's will—given through the teachings of His Church.
- And realize that those who practice NFP report a great strengthening of love and respect for one another...evident by the very low divorce rate of those couples.
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- Now wives tend to be more receptive to NFP than husbands. Many wives fear that their husband will go wandering if refused.
- And, having counseled many wives, I can tell you guys that they often feel used...as if they were valued only for sex.
- So husbands, be willing to do this small sacrifice for her...and by doing so, you implicitly say to her: *"I DO long for thee, my beloved, my dove...yet my love for thee drives me to seek the holiness of God in our lives together."*
- And, after all...it's not like you have to refrain for months or years, but only for days. Then when you come together, you know you are in total accord with God's will...and giving yourselves totally in love to one another. And isn't that what marriage is about?
- I always remember in the book of Tobit the prayer of the newly-married couple on their wedding night: *"Blessed art you, O God of our fathers...You made Adam and gave him Eve his wife as a helper and support...And now, O Lord, I am taking this [wife] of mine not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that I may find mercy and may grow old together with her." And she said with him, "Amen."* (Tobit 8:5-8)
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- We have an NFP introductory session coming up soon—this Thursday at 8 p.m.; see the bulletin. You have nothing to lose and all to gain by attending.
- And consider this: The Church has absolutely NO advantage in going against the popular current of the world in teaching against contraception and affirming NFP.

- How a pope would be sooooo popular to the world...acclaimed to the skies by the media if he changed this teaching of the Church.
  - *“Oh, isn’t Pope Bob I wonderful? Isn’t he insightful? Isn’t he progressive?”...etc., etc., etc.*
- No, there is no advantage for the Church...except that it truly be in accord with God’s will. Why else would she do it?
- So, you young couples...don’t deprive yourselves of learning this method of how to come closer not only to one another...but also to God Himself.

Reading 1

[Wis 12:13, 16-19](#)

There is no god besides you who have the care of all,  
that you need show you have not unjustly condemned.  
For your might is the source of justice;  
your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all.  
For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved;  
and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity.  
But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency,  
and with much lenience you govern us;  
for power, whenever you will, attends you.  
And you taught your people, by these deeds,  
that those who are just must be kind;  
and you gave your children good ground for hope  
that you would permit repentance for their sins.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16](#)

**R. (5a) Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

You, O LORD, are good and forgiving,  
abounding in kindness to all who call upon you.  
Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer  
and attend to the sound of my pleading.

**R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

All the nations you have made shall come  
and worship you, O LORD,  
and glorify your name.

For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds;  
you alone are God.

**R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity.  
Turn toward me, and have pity on me;  
give your strength to your servant.

**R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

Reading II

[Rom 8:26-27](#)

Brothers and sisters:

The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness;  
for we do not know how to pray as we ought,

but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings.

And the one who searches hearts  
knows what is the intention of the Spirit,  
because he intercedes for the holy ones  
according to God's will.

Gospel

Mt 13:24-43 or 13:24-30

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.”

**or**

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who sowed good seed in his field.  
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