

- In the original language, the weeds in our Gospel parable are not just any weed, but are a grain (“tares”) that looks like wheat, but is bitter and poisonous.
  - And what do weeds do? As any gardener knows, they sap the life away from the good plant, and may even eventually kill it.
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  - This parable reminds us that evil, deception and error are always lurking for opportunity, as St. Paul warns: “...*false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ...Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*”
  - A lot of Christians—even Catholics—don’t believe in Satan, even though Jesus affirms his existence, as He says today: “...*the enemy who sows [the weeds—those who do evil] is the devil,*”...just as He warns in Matthew 25 of “*the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*” (Matthew 25:41)
  - Ol’ Satan. Ol’ Scratch. The original ingrate...the first traitor against God’s pure holiness and goodness. In scriptures called the deceiver, the tempter, the father of lies, the adversary, he is the lying enemy who leads us away from God.
  - In rejecting God’s goodness, Satan rejected God Himself, and in his hatred he rejects those whom God loves—US...especially since we can attain to that eternal happiness that he threw away.
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- Now each person begins life as a good plant...a blank slate. And when we are taught the Gospel of Christ, we are planted in good soil—in fact, the best of soils.
  - But...we range here and there in our lives’ journey, encountering other good plants, but also weeds which sap the goodness of the soil away...errors taught as truths.
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  - One of the most destructive teachings of our day is that there IS no absolute truth: “You have your truth, I have my truth.” Well...that sounds inclusive, but is wrong nonetheless.

- Imagine trying to teach well-proven principles of physics and engineering and someone says: “Well, that’s your truth; I have my truth!”
  - That’s one thing about physical laws and mathematics: they let you know pretty quickly who is correct!
  - Likewise, God IS truth; Christ is truth—the way, the truth and the life. He IS what is real. I AM WHO AM. And anything diverging from God is NOT truth.
  - We may not suffer the detrimental effects of going against God’s moral truth as immediately as with physical laws and mathematics...but as we heard in the first reading, that is because of His patience. He has neither need nor desire to display His absolute justice immediately
  - As we read in Peter’s second letter: “*The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*” (2 Peter 3:9)
  - But God IS, and He is truth. What He teaches IS truth. There is no truth apart from what God has ordained—either in the physical or the spiritual realms. Those who seek God seek truth...and those who seek truth seek God, whether they know it or not.
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- 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...*” (Hebrews 13:8-9).
  - ...or if you wonder whether God’s moral law is still in effect, remember Jesus’ own words: “*Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them...Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 5:17-19)—a great motivation to become a CCD teacher, by the way.

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- It is said that Satan’s greatest victory is convincing the world that he does not exist. That is perhaps the most nefarious and difficult-to-eradicate weed he has sown.
  - But he is the deceiver who has led much of the world to denial of God—so that Man considers himself as a god. Ah, our vanity.

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- But we need not obsess over Satan. In fact, except in very rare and extreme cases, he is virtually powerless against us. And he is never given power over our souls; that is in our keeping alone. But we give our souls to him through sin.
  - Satan’s power is limited to influencing us through our imaginations—temptations of pride and wealth and lust and power.
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  - How defeat him? Quite simple; not easy, but simple: learn the faith, which IS goodness...and live it. Succinctly put: Do good and avoid evil.
  - If we do that, we live in a state of God’s grace, and Satan cannot touch that most precious of all our possessions: our soul.

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- 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 emphasizes holiness in marriage and in the marital embrace...encouraging the use of this natural and God-designed method of spacing births between children: natural family planning...which works with nature and the body rather than against it.
  - With NFP you respect not only God’s creation, but the totality and dignity of your spouse. NFP respects that incomparable gift of our ability to be “co-creators” of new little images of God.

- And know 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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- We are very blessed to have in our parish not only our own NFP instructor, but an instructor of instructors: Leslie Equibel, who not only teaches the method, but teaches the teachers! So please seriously consider learning and practicing this method.
- 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...except that she truly believe it to be in accord with God's will—the adherence to which should always be the uppermost priority of our lives, because only in His will we find goodness and eternal life.

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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