

Read

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10,
15-16

Romans 8:26-27

Matthew 13:24-43 or
13:24-30

LIVING THE WORD

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 19, 2020



REFLECTION

Patience can be difficult, and Jesus knows this. In today's Gospel, Jesus uses not one but three different parables to convey the importance of this virtue. First, Jesus uses the image of field where wheat and weeds grow together. Rather than immediately pulling the weeds up from the ground, Jesus reminds the disciples that the two must grow together before they can be separated. Then, Jesus uses the image of the tiny mustard seed that eventually grows into the largest of all trees. Finally, Jesus uses the image of yeast—tiny organisms that after some time enable bread to rise and become leavened.

Although different in details, each of these parables remind us that time and patience are required for full growth and maturation. We live in a time where we connect with others instantaneously through email, texts, and social media. Similarly, we can gather information about anything simply by typing a few words into a search engine. Growing in our relationship with God, however, is not instantaneous. While we are always in relationship with God, growing in our friendship with God takes time, energy and effort. We cannot take shortcuts or rush this process. Rather, we must live the gift of patience.



ACTION

What are some of the things that cause you to be impatient? Take some time to name these things to yourself and write them down. Then, think about some ways you can practice growing in patience in each of these situations. By considering these situations in advance, it is easier to take notice of times we might be impatient with ourselves, others and God and better respond with the gift of patience.

*"Patience is the companion
of wisdom."*

—St. Augustine of Hippo



? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Which images in today's Gospel most speak to you? What is it about these images that cause you to reflect on practicing patience?
- ❖ In what ways do you view growing in friendship with God as an ongoing process that cannot be rushed? How is this similar to your other friendships?



July 19, 2020

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #106A

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

Romans 8:26-27

Matthew 13:24-43 or 13:24-30

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

The parable of the weeds among the wheat centers upon the Kingdom of Heaven and the final judgment. Good and bad are allowed to grow throughout their lives up until the final harvest. At that time, the good wheat will be gathered for good use. The bad weeds will be separated for burning.

Q FOCUS: *To grow good wheat.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On July 22, the Church honors one of Jesus' closest friends and disciples, St. Mary Magdalene. For centuries she was mistakenly given a bad reputation as being a sinful prostitute. As the "Apostle to the Apostles," she is the one person to whom Jesus' Resurrection is directly revealed in all four Gospel accounts.

Church Teaching Connection

"Therefore, Lord, we pray: / graciously accept this oblation of our service, / that of your whole family; . . . / order our days in your peace, / and command that we be delivered from eternal damnation / and counted among the flock of those you have chosen" (Eucharistic Prayer I).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-30

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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.””

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Another parable is presented to us today, the parable of the weeds among the wheat. Jesus is presenting this story to a people who were pretty familiar with the land and obtaining food directly from the source. They did not have grocery stores at which someone could purchase a prepackaged loaf of bread, wrapped in plastic. Rather, the people of Jesus' time were used to gathering wheat from the field, obtaining the grains from their stalks, and using the grains of wheat to make bread from scratch. So, this story would have spoken directly to them using elements with which they were very familiar.

► **What does Jesus say the “kingdom of heaven” is like in this story?**

► **What happens to the field that is planted with wheat?**

The crux of this story centers upon a man sowing good seed in his field; this is what represents the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom is affected when the man's enemy comes to the field and adds bad seed to it. Both seeds are planted in the ground and spring forth plants that grow. Scripture scholars understand the bad seed that was planted to be a type of weed that looks very similar to the wheat plant when it first starts growing, but the weed is actually poisonous. So, as both the good and bad plants start their growth, they look pretty indistinguishable from each other. When they age, however, their differences can be noticed.

► **What happens with the plants in the field as they grow?**

► **What do you think the meaning is behind the growth of the wheat and the weeds in the same field?**

When the wheat plant grows to full growth, it offers a bounty which could then be used for good purposes like making bread that can nourish people. When the weeds grow up, they are a toxic presence within the field that can inhibit the growth of the good plants.

► **What are your thoughts about this idea of weeds growing amongst the wheat?**

Look at how the master of the field responds to his servant's offer to pull up all of the weeds.

► **How does the master of the field respond?**

► **Why do you think that he responds in this way?**

The master (he was the one who planted the good seeds in the first place) instructs his helpers to leave the weeds alone, for he does not want them to accidentally pull up any of the good wheat as well.

The field's owner's instruction to his servants is to allow both the wheat and the weeds to fully grow to the point that the wheat is ready to be harvested. That is the time in which they should gathered.

► **In the parable, what does the time of harvest represent?**

► **What will happen at that time?**

The time of harvest represents the time of God's judgment. The allowing of the weeds to continue to grow up until then indicates that the bad seeds have the opportunity for repentance up until that time of judgment. They change their lives. We too have the opportunity to repent of our sins and to turn our lives around to follow Jesus.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 235.

Both good and bad seeds are allowed to grow to their fullest extent in the parable.

The time of harvest represents the time of judgment.

The bad seeds have opportunity to repent and turn their lives around, even up until the last moment.

Act on the Word

First Impressions

For this activity you will need a number of pictures of people cut out from old magazine. Ideally, you would be able to find pictures of people from all walks of life. Some will be of people dressed in ways that are more conventional while others are dressed in less conventional ways. Some may have pictures of people with tattoos and piercings, while others are of people who appear without tattoos and piercings. Try and get as many pictures representing as many different people as possible.

Gather the group in a circle so that everyone can see you. Take each one of the magazine pictures and show it to the group. Invite the youth to give either a thumbs up or a thumbs down as to whether or not they think that they would like the person in the picture. Obviously, they are choosing to give a thumbs up or a thumbs down based solely on the image that they see in the magazine clipping. Then, enter into some honest discussion as to why they gave thumbs up and thumbs down to the pictures they saw. Why did they give thumbs up to certain people while others did not make the cut. Talk about how we as humans react based on first impressions that we may make of others.

Shift the discussion to tie in with today's Gospel reading. Note how in the parable that Jesus shares with his followers, the master of the field instructs his servants to allow the weeds to grow amongst the wheat. It is not their duty to judge the plants while they are growing; rather, the time for judgement is at the time of harvest. Have some discussion around how at times we may rush to judge other people without giving them the benefit of the doubt and prior to actually getting to know them. Shouldn't we give others a chance, just as God gives each and everyone of us a chance to ultimately respond to God's invitation in each of our lives?

Closing Prayer

*Lord God,
it is so easy to judge, so difficult to forgive.
Free us from our need to judge others,
and guide us in your mysterious way of love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.