

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness

God's mercy and compassion are the themes running through today's readings.



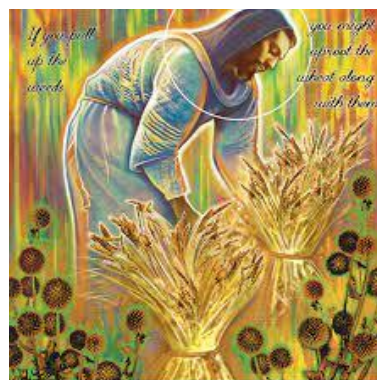
The **First Reading** offers a description of God's divine nature. The author emphasises God's universal care and patience as signs of strength: characteristics that stand at odds with worldly values.



In the midst of his troubles, the **Psalmist** reflects on the qualities of the God of mercy and compassion.

In the **Second Reading**, St Paul tells of the consequences of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christian prayer. Even when prayer is difficult for us as finite and limited human beings, Paul encourages us to hand over our struggles to the Spirit who prays deeply in our hearts to our Father.

The **Gospel** shares three parables about growth, each seen from a different perspective. The first tells of the wheat and the weeds. It challenges us to recognise that sometimes we must learn to live with situations we don't like, because the effort to remove or change them would do more harm than good. This is a shrewd picture of the patience and compassion needed to live with the ambiguities and complexities of human life. (Taken from Prego, St. Bueno's Outreach to the Diocese of Wrexham)



Reflection (Pope Francis-2017)

Today's Gospel reading offers **three parables** through which Jesus speaks to the crowds about the **Kingdom of God**. I will focus on the first: that of **the good wheat and the weeds**, which illustrates **the problem of evil in the world and highlights God's patience** (cf. Mt 13:24-30, 36-43). How much patience God has! The narrative takes

place in a field with two antagonists. On one side is the **master of the field, who represents God and who sows good seed**; on the other is **the enemy, who represents Satan and scatters weeds**.

As time passes, **the weeds grow among the wheat**, and the master and his servants express different opinions regarding this fact. The servants would like to intervene and uproot the weeds; but the master, who is concerned above all with saving the wheat, is against this, saying: ***"No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them"*** (v. 29). With this image, Jesus tells us that in this world good and evil are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them and eradicate all evil. God alone can do this, and he will do so at the Last Judgment. With its ambiguities and its composite character, **the present situation is the field of Christian freedom, in which the difficult exercise of discernment is made between good and evil**.

This field then, involves reconciling, with great trust in God and in his providence, two seemingly contradictory approaches: ***decision*** and ***patience***. **Decision is that of wanting to be good wheat** — we all want this — with all our might, and thus keeping away from the evil one and his seduction. **Patience means preferring a Church that acts as leaven in the dough, that is unafraid to sully her hands washing her children's clothes, rather than a Church of "purists" who presume to judge ahead of time who will be in the Kingdom of God and who will not.**

Today the Lord, who is Wisdom incarnate, helps us to understand that **good and evil cannot be identified with neatly defined areas or specific human groups**: "These are the good, those are the bad". He tells us that **the boundary line between good and evil passes through the heart of each person; it passes through the heart of each of us**, that is: We are all sinners. Because **we are all sinners, all of us are**, Jesus Christ, with his death on the Cross and his Resurrection, has freed us from the slavery of sin and given us the grace to journey in a new life; but along with Baptism he also gave us Confession, because **we all need to be forgiven for our sins**. **Looking always and only at the evil that is outside of us means not wanting to recognize the sin that is also inside us.**

Then Jesus teaches us a different way of looking at the field of the world, of observing reality. **We are called to learn God's time — which is not our time — and also God's "gaze"**: what were weeds or seemed to be weeds can become a good product. It is the reality of conversion. It is the prospect of hope!



