Homily for the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2026 Year A

Most of the people who would listen to Jesus were simple country folk, close to the earth, aware of the rise and fall of the seasons and with a keen eye for the harvest time.

So, when Jesus was speaking to them in stories and parables He would use images they could easily understand, for example the farmer going out to sow his seeds etc. Today's Gospel is a good example, the parable of the wheat and the tares.

Christ compares the Church, the people of God, to a field, a field in which wheat and weeds grow side by side until the harvest, the end of the world, the last judgement. Only then will the good and the virtuous be separated from the wicked.

In the world around us good and bad people mix, like wheat and weeds growing up in the same field. Some upright and impatient believers would question this. Why does God, who is good, allow evil to flourish side by side with goodness? They want to see the evil rooted out immediately.

In their impatience and zeal they too readily forget that every human heart, their heart, also contains a mixture of good and evil. As a sinful people we should be only too conscious of our feelings and how complex and complicated we are.

It is not always possible to draw clear cut lines between Saints and sinners, and the Church is not an exclusive community of the virtuous alone. The Church exists because we are sinners looking for Salvation.

The love, the patience and the tolerance extended by God to our own personal sinful situation should also be shown by us to those whose faults are known to us.

That Gospel story gives us an important insight into the inner life of God whose power is best displayed in leniency and endless patience.

This is a God who is more concerned with the conversion of people but never with their destruction. Nobody is ever written off by this God or considered beyond redemption.

His mercy is more urgent than His judgement and this nature is best revealed by His tolerance towards the wayward in our mists, especially those whose lives are choked by sin.

When Jesus sat and ate with sinners, public sinners whose weaknesses were highlighted, this scandalised the Pharisees. In our zeal to right all the wrongs in our society we can easily forget that it is God's world. He is in control, and this is not our business to judge others before He does. It should suffice us to know and trust that in the end good will triumph. A day of judgement and reckoning will one day come to us all, but in the meantime, as members of the Church, we should perhaps imitate the patience of God by forgiving the faults of others.

If you are harsh and judgmental by nature that is going to be very challenging.

Appearances can be deceptive. It is so easy to pin the label of ‘sinner’ upon another person, forgetting the sinners that we ourselves are, or have been.

We do not have to develop an attitude of indifference towards evil or sin, but rather love the Sinner and hate the sin.

Judging others before God is a very risky business. Never forget how weak we too can be in certain areas of our lives. We have more than enough to contend with in perhaps some of those swampy patches of our own lives where the wild weeds are growing. Weeds can never become wheat, but by the power of God a sinner can become a saint, It is never too late for a sinner to turn back to God and to be accepted.

Judgement is a powerful thing and let us thank God that on the last day we shall be judged by a loving and merciful God and not by one another.