

Homily for Sixteenth Sunday of the Year – A

Readings: Wisdom 12: 13, 16-19; Romans 8: 26-27; Matthew 13: 24-43



Fr Michael says:

Weeds among the Wheat

Why do we go to Church? This is a question which can have several answers, depending on our experience of life. We come together, to support and encourage each other as we journey through life, listening, sharing, supporting, comforting and even guiding people as we walk. We know that we are weak and frail: even sin and we need each other as we try to walk to meet the Father, helped by the Spirit. Who is this God towards whom we journey? Our vision and insight here are critical in how we respond and what we see. Today's message is that God is patient and understanding, as our Wisdom Reading says. We are supported by the Spirit when we find it hard to pray, as Paul reminds the Church in Rome. The original version of the Gospel Parable underlines this truth: it is never too late in life to return – it is only after death that things are irrevocable.

We cannot just divide people into good or bad: each of us is a mixture of both! Oskar Schindler saved over a thousand Jews - as one of them put it: "He was our father, our mother, our only hope. He never let us down." Yet what was portrayed in the film about him was at least surprising, if not off-putting! He was no saint: a womaniser, drinker, smoker, a Catholic in name only, a member of the Nazi party and as he put it: he wanted to end the war with "two trunks full of money!" He exploited the Jewish cheap labour! As the war went on, he changed – he saw the horrors of the "final solution. He protected his workers, even being arrested twice for his labours and saving them from the concentration camps. We need to remember too that the Nazis, bad as they were, were still human beings and good could be detected in them.

Beware judgments! We do not write off people because of a failing. What can we do? Be patient and lenient towards ourselves, recognise all that is within us and trust that with God's help the good will triumph – we keep trying, that is the key! Then we are the same to others, only God knows all – we only see a part of them. We must just look for the good in others and try to develop it. We are not judged on a single act or moment, but on the whole of it. Let us reflect on Anthony de Mello's words: "Attempts to hide the streakiness of our holy people, though sometimes successful, are always dishonest!"

Alexander Solzhenitsyn reflecting on his time in labour camps wrote: "We must sow loyalty, if we do not want to reap betrayal; honesty, if we do not want to reap deceit. Even though we have no absolute guarantee that what we sow will always fall on good ground, or that someone else may not come along and sow contrary seed, nevertheless, if we are careful to sow good seeds we can, within reason, trust our expectations, because nature has shown that if what is planted bears fruit at all, it will yield more of itself. So, let us sow good seed."