

## **Homily : Let the weeds and wheat grow together. Matthew 13: 24-43**

As Father Jan indicated last week, we have three weeks of parables, that Jesus taught, about the kingdom of God.

Jesus used illustrations from nature to help people understand better the approaches to life that he wants us to have. In this week's gospel, he shared this example of how God sows good seed , but weeds can grow up amongst us.

The example he used of darnel seeds sprouting along with wheat seeds was a classic reality for the people of his time. Wheat was an essential food for them to produce bread, but whenever they planted wheat they were faced with the dilemma that a weed known as darnel would somehow sprout along with it. A particular difficulty was that the wheat sprouts and darnel sprouts were almost identical. Indeed, even as the plants grew you could not tell exactly which was which, until harvest time when the new wheat grains would appear. If you tried to weed out the darnel before then you would uproot the wheat as well, and destroy your chance of a good harvest.

That gospel has many parallels in life for us. We would like to live in a perfect world, and weed out from among us, the people, or issues that we find uncomfortable or are scared of. As parents we would like to see our children protected from any bad influences. We would prefer to live in a church without problems or imperfections.

But it seems that the reality of living in the kingdom is that we are called by Jesus to live amongst imperfection, and cope with the imperfections of others along the way. Another aspect of this is that if we tried to be too quick to weed out the people or the issues in our lives that we think might not be fruitful, we risk eliminating fruitful seeds that we have just simply misrecognized.

Some scholars have even called this parable. The parable of the second chance. Let's never be too hasty to judge someone else who seems a little different from us. We need to wait patiently and to see what harvest they produce at a bit later in life. We certainly need to recognize people by their fruitfulness, not just by their appearances. We sometimes need to give people a second chance.

As I was reflecting on these Scriptures over recent weeks and considering how this parable might be relevant , I was conscious, there is a matter that we as a faith community need to be patient in making judgment upon.

That matter, is the introduction of revisions to our liturgy. Everyone hopefully is aware that we have been in a process of making some changes to our liturgy for some time.

By Advent this year , we have been asked by the Archbishop to implement some specific changes to our liturgy in line with all English speaking Catholics in the world. We have already practiced some new musical compositions, and the next step is to introduce some minor changes to the wording of responses we make in the mass. A number

A number of us have been to workshops run by the archdiocese explaining in detail why and what these changes are. Indeed, every week now in the Catholic leader. There are reflections on this.

I have to confess to you that when faced initially with these changes, I was both reluctant and resistant. I have become quite comfortable with what we have been doing since the Vatican Council. Never the less the church is always growing and renewing itself, and some minor changes to our rituals have been decreed, in order to give us a deeper sense of the sacredness of our liturgy, and reflect more closely the words and concepts used in biblical texts. After going through the training that the archdiocese offered. I realized that I had to give these changes a second chance. I realized that there was some spiritual fruitfulness some spiritual harvest to be achieved by this renewal of our liturgy. Ive been challenged to understand more, the theology behind the mass, and a host of wonderful resources have been made available for us with this in mind . And so I would ask everyone here to give these new improvements a chance to take root and mature and become fruitful in our lives.

One of the most simple changes in the wording of the mass is that in response to the greeting of : “the Lord be with you” , we will respond : “and with your spirit “ . This matches the response that already is said in most other languages, including Latin, Italian, French, Spanish and German. Indeed, this is a direct take from St. Paul's greetings in his letters to the Galatians, to Timothy, to the Philippians, and to Philamon. The new wording of this greeting expresses our desire that the Holy Spirit be present in each of us. In responding : “ and with your spirit “ ,we are acknowledging and desiring that the presence of the Holy Spirit be with the person who offers that greeting.

For me as a Deacon the words of dismissal at the end of the mass have been changed as well. Instead of saying to you, Go in the peace of Christ , I may now say to you, “Go in peace , glorifying the Lord with your life” ; or “Go to announce the gospel of the Lord.” To me that is a better description of what we should be doing as result of or participation in mass.

There is a detailed explanation for every change that's being made in the mass, available on numerous websites. If you Google “ Roman missal Australia”, you can do your own detailed research. But, of course, over the coming months we will try to provide as much education and understanding throughout homilies through notes in the bulletin, and any specific liturgical training people desire.

As I said at the start of this homily , nothing is perfect in this life, and there will be some small things that we struggle with. In the Nicene Creed. the word “consubstantial” has been inserted. There is a detailed explanation for this, but some of us may still find it is an unusual word. Interesting the church leaders have suggested that we might use the Apostles Creed in the mass instead of the Nicene Creed. You might let us know your opinions on that. I have brought along some copies of the new liturgical responses for people to have a look at if you haven't already.

Once again, I would invite people to give these changes a second chance, give these seeds a chance to grow. May the Lord be with you . May we go in peace glorifying the Lord with our lives.