



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 23 July 2017

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

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! Each one of us too can say this: "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 freedom, 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*. I would like to ask you: "Whoever is not a sinner raise your hand". No one! 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": thanks to the beneficial influence of uneasy anticipation, 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!

May the Virgin Mary help us to accept, in the reality that surrounds us, not only filth and evil, but also good and beauty; to unmask the work of Satan, but above all to trust in the action of God who fertilizes history.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, I have been following with trepidation the grave tension and violence taking place these days in Jerusalem. I feel the need to express a heartfelt appeal to moderation and dialogue. I invite you to join me in praying that the Lord may inspire in everyone the goals of reconciliation and peace.

I greet all of you, faithful of Rome and pilgrims from various parts of the world: families, parish groups, associations. In particular, I greet the Faithful of Munster, Ireland; the Franciscan Sisters of Saint Elizabeth ("Bigie"); the lyrical symphonic choir of Enna; the young people of Casamassima who have performed volunteer service in Rome.

My thoughts and encouragement go to the young participants attending the "*Cantiere Hombre Mundo*", who are committed to bearing witness to the joy of the Gospel in the most impoverished peripheries on every continent.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. Please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch!

Arrivederci!

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