

19 July 2026 - 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time 'A'

[Wis 12:13, 16-19; Rom 8:26-27; Matt 13:24-43](#)

H

O M I L Y

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Gospel of Matthew has brought together here three of Jesus' parables, all of which relate to the Kingdom of Heaven—that Kingdom which Jesus came to establish on earth. It is the Kingdom that will be fully realized at the end of time, but which is already present and growing. And indeed, one characteristic of the Kingdom that all three parables, each in its own way, highlight is that the Kingdom, like all of creation, is subject to a law of growth. Even the Son of God, when he became incarnate, submitted to this law. Does not the Gospel tell us that he grew in age and wisdom before God and before men?

These parables speak to us of the seed sown in the ground, which germinates slowly; then of the mustard seed, tiny though it is, yet from which a fairly large plant springs up; and finally of the pinch of leaven that a housewife puts into three large measures of flour, which causes the whole dough to rise.

A first lesson is that growth takes time, and that every plant has its own pace of growth. Pulling on a flower will not make it grow any faster. We would like to achieve everything quickly, almost instantly, including our own conversion, and even more so that of our brothers and sisters. And it takes God a century or more to grow an oak tree. And, fortunately for us, God is as patient with us as he is with the oak tree.

There is another seed within us. It is the seed of divine life that God placed within each of us when he created us in His image and when He breathed His breath of life into the nostrils of the first man, as described in the Book of Genesis. Because we are created in the image of God, because God has given us His Spirit, this Spirit creates within us a constant longing for continual growth. We are called to be ever more conformed to the image of Christ. It is by becoming aware of this longing and making it our own that we can fulfil the Gospel precept to pray without ceasing. It is this prayer that Saint Paul speaks of in today's second reading, when he says that we do not know how to pray, but that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Let this groaning, this desire, this longing for ever greater growth take up ever more space within us.

Another lesson from today's Gospel is that we must not set ourselves up as judges of our brothers and sisters. Our natural tendency is to divide people into two categories: the good and the bad. Naturally, we usually place ourselves in the first category. This tendency is evident in individuals as well as in nations or religious groups.

Constantly driven by a deep need for security, we are easily unsettled by the relative nature of all things. We then try to turn all our concepts into absolutes, and we are readily unsettled by those who do not feel the same need. We quickly become intolerant and sectarian.

Even the Apostles were scandalized by the attitude of the Pharisees and certain wavering disciples, and they would even have liked Jesus to call down fire from heaven upon his enemies. Jesus refused to do so. He was the universal shepherd. He had not come in power as a judge whose mission was to separate the good from the wicked. He did not draw dividing lines amongst His disciples. He did not judge. He had come for sinners and simply hoped that everyone would recognize themselves as such. In His love, whilst awaiting a response, He had extraordinary respect for all those He loved. His patience was an expression of radical self-detachment. Throughout His life He was the embodiment of divine patience towards sinners. He showed that divine forgiveness was boundless and that no sin could tear a person away from the Father's power.

As the Body of Christ, the Church has been entrusted with the task of embodying Jesus' patience towards humanity. Her mission is not to separate the good from the bad, but to present an authentic face of love. This is true of the small local Church that is a monastic community, just as it is of the universal Church. On earth, the good seed is always mixed with the chaff and even with the tares. The dividing line between good and evil runs through the very heart of each one of us. Separation can only take place after death.

None of us can hope to be able to imitate Christ's patience unless we are nourished by His Word and His Bread. It is for this reason that we still celebrate the Eucharist today, which can nourish the seeds of life within us.

Armand Veilleux