

OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

19 JULY 2020

WHEAT AMONG THE WEEDS. The world in which we live is a mixture of wheat and weeds. Wonderful acts of heroism and self-sacrifice occur alongside shocking acts of violence and abuse of power. In the midst of a world tainted by sin we are called to live the values of the kingdom of God. This can be difficult, but the Spirit will help us in our weakness and God, the just and merciful judge, will reward us.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON Ps 53:6, 8

See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

GREETING

P. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

P. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

P. Lord Jesus, you are the image of the unseen God: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. You are the first born of all creation: Christ, have mercy.

R. Christ, have mercy.

P. You are the head of the body, the Church: Lord, have mercy.

R. Lord, have mercy.

P. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, / and on earth peace to people of good will. / We praise you, / we bless you, / we adore you, / we glorify you, / we give you thanks for your great glory, / Lord God, heavenly King, / O God, almighty Father. / Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, / Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, / you take away the sins of the world, / have mercy on us; / you take away the sins of the world, / receive our prayer; / you are seated at the right hand of the Father, / have mercy on us. / For you alone are the Holy One, / you alone are the Lord, / you alone are the Most High, / Jesus Christ, / with the Holy Spirit, / in the glory of God the Father. / Amen.

COLLECT

P. Show favour, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in

the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING Wis 12:13, 16-19

A reading from the book of Wisdom

In the place of sin, you give repentance.

There is no god, other than you, who cares for everything, / to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly. / Your justice has its source in strength, / your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all. / You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned / and you expose the insolence of those who know it; / but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgement, / you govern us with great lenience, / for you have only to will, and your power is there. / By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people / how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men, / and you have given your sons the good hope / that after sin you will grant repentance.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

RESP PSALM Ps 85:5-6, 9-10, 15-16. R. v. 5

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

1. O Lord, you are good and forgiving, / full of love to all who call. / Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer / and attend to the sound of my voice. **R.**

2. All the nations shall come to adore you / and glorify your name, O Lord: / for you are great and do marvellous deeds, / you who alone are God. **R.**

3. But you, God of mercy and compassion, / slow to anger, O Lord, / abounding in love and truth, / turn and take pity on me. **R.**

SECOND READING Rom 8:26-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The Spirit himself pleads for us in a way that could never be put into words.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION cf. Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia! / Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; / you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mt 13:24-43

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R. Glory to you, O Lord.

Let them grow together until the harvest.

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, "Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?" "Some enemy has done this," he answered. And the servants said, "Do you want us to go and weed it out?" But he said, "No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn."

He put another parable before them, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.'

ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD



Parish Priest: Fr Jacek (Jack) Cichy

Administration Coordinator: Nicolle Mazzaferro (Mon-Thurs) admin@stmarthas.org.au

Administration Support: Larissa Argiro (Fridays) office@stmarthas.org.au

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Music Ministry: Marcella Ayoub & Agnes Lee

Children's Liturgy Coordinator: Rachel Suriano

Plenary Council 2020 Ambassador: Helena O'Neill

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'Let them grow together until the harvest ... Matthew 13

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Principal: Judy Gastin

Assistant Principal: Leanne Meehan

REC: Attilia Kazacos

THE PARISH OF ST MARTHA'S ACKNOWLEDGES THE WANGUL PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT

Vision:

**Welcoming
Eucharistic
Transformed by the Word
Full of Grace
Proclaiming Good News**



Mission:

**Alive with the Spirit
Inspired by St Martha
We Celebrate & Witness
God's love
Using our Gifts & Talents**

MASS TIMES



Tuesdays: 7.30am Wednesdays: 9.10am

Thursdays: 9.10am Fridays: 9.10am

Saturdays: 9.10am, 5pm Vigil Mass

Sundays: 8.00am; 10.00am & 6.00pm

1st Saturday of every month: 8-9am Adoration, 9am Benediction, 9.10am Healing Mass and Anointing of the Sick, followed by reconciliation

RECONCILIATION:

Saturday after 9.10am Mass or by appointment.

BAPTISM:

Available dates to be Advised

Next Preparation Session:

To be Advised



MARRIAGES: By appointment only.
(6 months' notice is required).



ROSARY: Tuesday & Saturday after morning Mass, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8.30am and 7.30pm on Fridays in conjunction with Marian Movement of Priests Cenacle and Divine Mercy Chaplet

LIFE ASCENDING GROUP:

TBA



PRAYER GROUP / ADORATION AT ST MARTHA'S CHURCH:

Mondays 10.30am - 11.30am

SYDNEY MALAYELEE ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Rosary, Mass & Adoration from 6.30pm to 9pm on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Rosary & Bible Sharing 6.30pm on the 4th Saturday of the month



ADORATION AT SISTER DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE MASTER:

Daily from 2.30pm-6.00pm



Please continue to support the St Vincent De Paul Society through the Church Poor Boxes.

*In the Spirit of St Martha,
let us continue to help others and Carry
Hope Everywhere.*



SAFE GUARDING

A reminder to parents that the Notice-Board located at the side entrance contains various resources for children regarding Safeguarding.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY.

Abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with a crime are the police. If you - or anyone you know - have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance.

The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

Please be aware that if you "TAG" St Martha's in photos on your Facebook page, the images also appear on an "unofficial" St Martha's Facebook page. This "unofficial" page was created automatically by Facebook and is not controlled by St Martha's. We kindly remind you to take care when uploading photos of any children without parent consent.



IMPORTANT NOTICE:

IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN IN - ACOLYTES; READERS; EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS; CHOIR; CHILDREN'S LITURGY (LEADERS & CHILDREN) & SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM (LEADERS & CHILDREN). SIGN IN FOLDERS ARE KEPT IN THE SACRISTY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

ALTAR SERVERS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE SACRISTY WITHOUT A PARENT/TEACHER. THE SIGN IN FOLDER IS LOCATED IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE SACRISTY.

Nicolle will be away from the office from Monday 27th July until Monday 3rd August.

Printed copies of the Catholic Weekly are now available again.

With all churches reopened for Mass across the Archdiocese of Sydney, the hard copy edition of the Catholic Weekly is available again in parishes this weekend for \$2.00



In this week's edition:

- An interview with the star of the TV series, The Chosen, on the life of Jesus
- Three Sydney siblings embrace religious life
- Guy Sebastian's surprise gift for school choir

Collect your Catholic Weekly as you leave Mass today and support our Archdiocesan newspaper.

The HOPE Keepsakes are available from the Church or by contacting the Parish Office. Don't forget to upload your images to the St Martha's Facebook Page with #carryhope



Background on the Gospel Reading (Loyola Press)

In today's Gospel, Jesus offers three parables to describe the Kingdom of Heaven. He also explains why he speaks to the crowds in parables and interprets the parable of the sower for the disciples. This reading is a continuation of Jesus' discourse that we began reading last Sunday. All three parables use commonplace experiences to describe aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven. The first parable is longer and more detailed than the next two, and it alerts us to the two-fold reality of the Kingdom of Heaven. The beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven can be found in this world. The fruition of the Kingdom of Heaven, however, will not be realized until the final judgment. In the meantime, as Jesus' explanation to the disciples cautions, any effort to judge the progress of the Kingdom of Heaven is premature. Only God, in the final judgment, will distinguish the fruit of the Kingdom of Heaven and offer its reward. The second and third parables call to our attention the abundance that will result from the small beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven. Just as a mustard seed—the smallest of all seeds—will become a large bush, so too God will bring his Kingdom to full bloom. As a small amount of yeast will leaven the entire batch of bread, so too God will bring about the expansion of his Kingdom. In each case the image is of the superabundance that God brings out of even the smallest of signs of the Kingdom. Contained within these parables are words of caution as well as words of consolation. In the parable of the sower we are warned against judging others. To judge and uproot the "weeds" prematurely will harm the wheat; final judgment rests with God. In the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, we are consoled by the message that God can work wonders and produce abundance from even the smallest beginnings of the Kingdom of Heaven.



NEW SETS OF WEEKLY PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR COLLECTION IN THE CHURCH.

We encourage all Parishioners to join the giving system by either Weekly Envelope or Monthly Credit Card as this is the main income of the parish, by means of which we run everyday expenses, funds projects and plan for the future. If you would like to join forms are available in the Church Foyer which can be returned via any collection plate or directly to the parish office.

2019/2020 Tax Receipts are now available in the Church Foyer. If you would like you receipt mailed please contact the parish office on 9746 6131 (option 2).

First Eucharist Dates for 2020

Parent information night	Tuesday 13 October 7pm- parents only
Lesson 1 plus commitment mass	Saturday 17 October 3.30pm followed by 5pm commitment mass
Lesson 2	Saturday 24 October 3.30pm followed by 5.00pm mass
Lesson 3	Saturday 31 st October @3.30pm followed by 5.00pm mass
Lesson 4	Saturday 7 November @3.30pm followed by 5.00pm mass
Retreat	November 14 2.00pm-4.30pm
First Holy Communion Masses	Sunday 15 November 12pm, Saturday 21 November 11am and 22 November 12pm

25th & 26th July

	VIGIL	8AM	10AM	6PM
Special Ministers	Peter McCluskey	Yvonne Martins	Therese Issa	Andrew Bova
	Marian McCluskey	Peter Yamin	Maria Soares Helen Williamson	Mary l'Estrange
Readers	Natalie Baini	Daniel Martins	Merlyn D'Souza	Miriam Redolfi
	Patricia Saad	Sandor Toth	Michael Quinlan	Anne Chow
Altar Servers	Lincoln M.	Julian M.	Catelyn C.	Marina B.
	Hayden M.	Lucas M.	Elijah M.	Oliver B.
	Therese S.	Jacob M.	Emilia T.	Volunteer Needed
	Sophia S.	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Wardens	VIGIL	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Joy Li	Phil Robinson	Trudie Rogers	Jean Duma
Children's Liturgy			10AM	10AM
			TBA	TBA

If you are unable to attend your rostered Mass kindly organise a replacement.

MASS INTENTIONS

Recently Deceased:	Maria Casmiro, Sr Maura McAvoy op, Sr Thecla Caruana, Sr Cecily Gaudry, Sr Marie Gaudry, Noeleen Smith, Bernard Nader, Philip Huynh, Mary Bentley, Mary Zammit, Daragh Hayden, Daniel Lucich, Sr Sophie McGrath, Fr Noel Connolly.
Repose Of The Soul:	Fr Adrian Horgan, Fr Paul Ryan, Br Ray Dowding, Gerald Wilson, John Ferguson, Ken Fraser, Connie Wong, Aldo Amarino, Salvatore (Phillip) Puglisi, William (Bill) & Dorothy Starr, Roger O'Reilly, Stefano, Estelle Thurn, Anne Cecilia Glass, Reginald & Agnes Glass, Gerald & Frances Gleeson, Faado & Alice Herro, Patrick & Janet Reynolds, Jim Reynolds, Ken Rich, Monica & Patrick Ryan, Stephen Maxwell Stewart & Christopher John Stewart, Dr Stephanie Winfield, Philip Winfield, Francesco & Maria Colagiuri, Caterina & Matteo Genova, Lisa Cooke, Michael & Mary Cassar, Guiseppe & Romilda Reginato.
Anniversaries:	Maria Vozzo, Kathleen Woodland, Mary Liu, John Harrington, Joseph Ayoub, Rodolfo Sereno, Henry O'Hara, Monsignor Greg Weaver, Lorenza Sultana, Charlie Issac, Len O'Donnell, Elie Sahyoun, Boulos & Damia Baini, Mary Margaret Baini, Judith Bernadette Goodacre, Luke Goodacre, James Erskine, Tony Khoury, Marcus Byrne.
Sick Intentions:	Basil Hayes, Marc Kayrouz, Br Jude Butcher cfc & Peter Starr.
Special Intentions:	Sarah Argiro, Members of the Lucich & Argiro Families, Members of the Casmiro & Martins Families, Pauline Murphy, John Murphy, Joseph Chois & Family, Nenita Torres, Rineesh & Wandu, Kristian Seric & Family. Deceased Friends, Relatives & Benefactors of the Dominican Order & the St Vincent de Paul Society & Benefactors, Holy Souls.

ACBC National Catholic Men's Gathering

The ACBC National Catholic Men's Gathering for 2020 is now being offered as an online event for registered participants. This modified program will be delivered in four pre-recorded sessions of approximately 1 hour in length. Each session will offer input from a variety of speakers and musicians, along with a response and questions for group discussion or individual reflection. The program is flexible, allowing you to participate individually or gather with others from your parish/diocese or men's ministry group.

REVISED Online Program
Saturday, 15 August 2020
catholicmensgathering.com.au



Aim: To inspire and encourage all Catholic men with a vision for personal discipleship, service and mission in the family, parish, diocese and the world.

Cost: FREE Registration: Available from Monday 29th June

Event Program: Available from Saturday 15th August, 2020

Go to: www.catholicmensgathering.com.au

OUR THREE TEMPTATIONS By Ron Rolheiser



Cosmologists today tell us that the universe has no single centre. Its centre is everywhere, every place, every planet, every city, every species, and every person. But we already know this. Faith tells us that what ultimately defines us and gives us our identity and energy is the image and likeness of God in us. We are God's blessed ones, masters of creation, special to God and special within creation. And we know this long before religion tells it. Deep down, whether we admit it or not, we each nurse the secret of being special. And this is not just ego or narcissism but a congenital imprint inside our very souls. Imprinted in the core of our being is the sense that we are not just an accidental,

anonymous chips of dust, almost invisible on the evolutionary conveyer-belt, destined to flicker for an instant and then disappear forever. We know we are more. We, literally, feel timelessness, eternity, and immortal meaning inside of ourselves. In our daily lives that often causes more heartaches than it solves. It is not easy to live out our blessed, special status when, most of the time, everything around us belies that we are special. As much as we experience ourselves as special, we also experience emptiness, anonymity, and our ordinariness. And so it can be easy, in the end, to believe that we aren't special at all, but are precisely small, petty spirits, haunted by over-inflated egos. But, while over-inflated egos do cause their share of heartaches, it is still an unhealthy temptation to believe that we are not blessed simply because life finds us one-among-six-billion-others, struggling, and seemingly not special in any way.

Faith tells the true story: We are, all of us, made in God's image and likeness, blessed, and our private secret that we are special is in fact the deepest truth. However that isn't always easy to believe. Life and circumstance often tire us in ways that tempt us to believe its opposite. It happened to Jesus. He too was tempted, and there was a particular prelude to his vulnerability: During his baptism, he had heard his Father say: "You are my blessed son, in whom I take delight!" Those words then formed and defined his self-consciousness. Knowing that he was blessed, Jesus could then look out at the world and say: "Blessed are you when you are poor... and meek ... and persecuted." But throughout his life Jesus struggled to always believe that. For instance, immediately after his baptism, we are told, the spirit drove him into the desert where he fasted for forty days and forty nights – and afterwards "he was hungry". Obviously what scripture is describing here is not simply physical hunger. Jesus was empty in ways that made him vulnerable to believe that he was not God's blessed child.

These were his three temptations:

First, the devil tempted him to this effect: "If you are God's specially blessed one, turn these stones into bread." In essence, the devil's taunt was this: "If you believe that you are God's specially blessed creature, why is your life so empty?" Jesus' reply, "One doesn't live on bread alone!" might be rendered: "I can be empty and still be God's blessed one! Being blessed and special is not dependent upon how full or empty my life is at a given moment!"

The second temptation has to do with human glory and its absence. The devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and says: "All of these will be yours if you worship me!" The taunt is: "If you're God's blessed one, how come you're a big, fat nobody? Not famous, not known, anonymous." And Jesus' reply might be worded this way: "I can be a big nobody and still be God's blessed one. Blessedness doesn't depend upon fame, on being a household name!"

The third temptation follows the same lines: The devil takes Jesus to the top of the temple and challenges him to throw himself down to make God catch him since, in faith, it is promised that God won't let his blessed one "dash his foot against a stone". Jesus responds that we shouldn't put God to the test. The temptation and how we should resist it are both contained in his reply. In essence, what Jesus says when the devil challenges him to throw himself off the top of the temple to prove his specialness is this: "I'll take the stairs down, just like everyone else!" Our blessedness is not predicated on having a VIP elevator, or on having any special privileges that set us apart from others. We are God's blessed ones, even when we find ourselves riding the city buses. And it is good to remember, namely, that we are God's special, blessed sons and daughters, even when we lives seem empty, anonymous, and devoid of any special privileges because then we won't forever be putting God and our restless hearts to the test, demanding more than ordinary life can give us.

**Do you need help
finding help?**

Relationships. Parenting. Ageing.
Disabilities. Addictions. Mental Health.



CCareline 131819

A free and confidential helpline.

✉ connect@catholiccaro.org
🌐 CCarolino.org
🕒 8am – 6pm Monday – Friday

He told them another parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through.'

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. This was to fulfil the prophecy:

I will speak to you in parables
and expound things hidden since the
foundation of the world.

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to him and said, 'Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us.' He said in reply, 'The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil one; the enemy who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. The Son of Man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offences and all who do evil, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Shorter form 13:24-30.

HOMILY

PROFESSION OF FAITH APOSTLES' CREED

Or the Nicene Creed may be said.

I believe in God, / the Father almighty, / Creator of heaven and earth, / and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, / who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, / born of the Virgin Mary, / suffered under Pontius Pilate, / was crucified, died and was buried; / he descended into hell; / on the third day he rose again from the dead; / he ascended into heaven, / and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; / from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. / I believe in the Holy Spirit, / the holy catholic Church, / the communion of saints, / the forgiveness of sins, / the resurrection of the body, / and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

After the priest raises the paten with the bread and prays, and then the chalice, we respond to each prayer:

R. Blessed be God for ever.

P. Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

R. May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

P. O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice brought to completion varied offerings of the law, accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your faithful servants and make it holy, as you

blessed the gifts of Abel, so that what each has offered to the honour of your majesty may benefit the salvation of all. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

PREFACE I-VIII OF THE SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME

After the Preface, we sing or say:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

THE MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

P. The mystery of faith.

All: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

COMMUNION RITE

P. At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven ...

P. Deliver us, Lord, we pray...

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

P. Lord Jesus Christ, who said...

R. Amen.

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R. And with your spirit.

P. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

All exchange a sign of peace

LAMB OF GOD

All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P. Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

R. Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Ps 110:4-5

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders; he gives food to those who fear him.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P. Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

P. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

P. Go forth, the Mass is ended.

R. Thanks be to God.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL

PATIENCE IS BETTER THAN MISPLACED ZEAL

Today's Gospel presents a further image from agriculture in Palestine. A poisonous weed called darnel affects wheat crops. In the early stages it looks very like the young shoots of wheat. By the time both plants can be distinguished their roots are so entwined as to make tearing out the darnel very injurious to the wheat.

The parable addresses the disciples' dismay at the continuing prevalence of evil in the world. If, as Jesus teaches, the Kingdom of God has dawned, why has God not intervened to root out evil once and for all?

Like the wheat and darnel in the field, good and evil are at present so inextricably co-existent as to make too ruthless an attempt to eradicate the one fatal to a successful harvest of the other. In the harvest time to come, however, God will deal once and for all with evil, before gathering in the 'wheat' of the kingdom.

The parable also challenges the kind of religious zeal that, filled with moral outrage, wants to go in and root out from the community of believers any considered unworthy to be there.

It can even apply on an individual level. So often a person's good qualities spring from the same source as their less desirable ones. An irascible person may struggle vigorously for justice; a laid-back character may be a good listener – and so on.

Christianity's long history of intolerance – the Inquisition, etc. – shows the tragedy and folly of being more zealous to root out evil than to encourage good. The final judgement belongs to God.

BRENDAN BYRNE, SJ

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

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