

16th Sunday In Ordinary Time Matthew Homily 2017

1. If God is good, loving and all powerful, why does he allow evil in the world
 - a. Why do terrorists, murderers, thieves, sexual perverts exist?
 - b. This has been a long philosophical question
 - c. Problem of evil, how can an all-powerful, all-good God allow evil
 - d. why doesn't God just get rid of all the evil people
2. Jesus answer is rather typical, He simply tells a story, a parable
 - a. You have a farmer who sows good seed
 - b. But he has an enemy who, hidden by darkness, sows weeds along with the wheat
 - c. Only as the weeds grow up with the wheat does it become noticeable
 - d. Slaves ask master: should we pull out the weeds right away
 - e. Master says no, you might pull up the wheat as well
 - f. We will wait for the harvest where the harvesters can separate weeds from the wheat and burn the weeds
3. As with any good story there can be several levels of meaning
 - a. On a universal level God has created the world good but sin has entered the world
 - b. So, we see evil in the world
 - c. we think God should get rid of evildoers
 - d. a little problem can develop
 - e. how pure we would want God to be
 - f. if we are honest with ourselves, we are often not as innocent as we like to present ourselves
 - g. If God demanded absolute purity, there would be no one left
 - h. For our benefit, God can transform us with His forgiveness
 - i. He turns us from being weeds to being wheat worthy of being gathered into His kingdom
4. This is another possible meaning of the parable
 - a. God created us with the intention that we would be worthy of Him
 - b. He even adopted us as His child in baptism giving us the grace to be holy
 - c. But as the parable says an enemy sows weeds within us
 - d. This enemy may be the devil who convinces us we are not worthy of God's love
 - i. We might as well just give in to temptations
 - e. it may be the influence of the world around us
 - i. we want to fit in with the crowd
 - ii. if everybody else is doing it, it can't be that wrong
 - f. the enemy may be our own flesh, wounded by sin
 - i. We get attracted to something that is not spiritually healthy
 - ii. Soon it becomes a bad habit that is difficult to change
5. This is where God's mercy becomes so evident in the parable
 - a. He does not attack us, ripping out the evil that we commit against our will
 - b. Rather He remains everlastingly patient with us
 - c. He gives us the chance to change the various directions in our life

- d. He offers us His grace, His very life, as healing power to make small changes
 - e. We can look at the weeds in our lives and find ways to change them so that we find virtue instead.
 - f. An example of this is the internet
 - g. Internet makes it possible to view pornography much easier than ever before
 - i. If pornography stayed at just viewing dirty pictures, it would be evil enough exploiting men and women to reveal themselves
 - ii. But a pornographic picture will never stay as a single picture
 - iii. First it deadens the sense of wonder and mystery that is meant to be the essence of the marital act
 - iv. Rather than making a gift of self, sex becomes merely a selfish moment of pleasure
 - v. After a while the pictures are not thrilling enough, so people move to more stimulating things such as child pornography or phone sex
 - vi. Part of the power of pornography is the shame it produces
 - vii. Shame looks a lot like guilt but is more insidious
 - viii. Guilt is realizing that I made a mistake and asking for forgiveness
 - ix. Shame is thinking I am so evil that there is no hope for me
 - x. I am stuck wallowing in the evil that I have committed
 - h. Pornography is just an example, all sin works that way
 - i. Shame by itself does not change us
 - ii. We must ask for God's help to move away from shame to acceptance of guilt
 - iii. When we are ready to acknowledge our guilt we can be confident that God will forgive us and give us another chance
6. All of us are sinners in one way or another
- a. We all struggle with questions of shame and guilt
 - b. In this parable Jesus assures us of God's mercy
 - c. If there is even the remotest chance that we will come back to him, He will welcome us
 - d. He does not rip us apart to force us to be part of His flock His family
 - e. Instead He patiently waits for us to recognize our need for Him so that we can be the wheat that will be gathered into His barn rather than the weeds bundled to be burned.