

Homily. 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 18/19 July 2020.

Chapter 13 of Matthew's gospel tells us what his gospel is all about. In 7 parables Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of Heaven, what it's like and how it comes about. It's all good news for us because the Kingdom is a gift to us from God, not something that we have to make happen all by ourselves. What's more, it unfolds at God's pace which is the right pace. Setbacks and challenges are bound to happen, but the Kingdom's coming is inevitable and the work of helping it come is work that Jesus invites us to do, with Him shouldering the bulk of the load and burden.

Last weekend we listened to the 'master parable' of the sower, God generously seeding the world with the Word, Jesus, and the various responses that we, the soil make to the living word is sown into us. This weekend seeds are once again at the heart of each story, seeds rich with potential, empowered to grow and produce their fruit even when facing competition, malice and difficulties.

An enemy sowed weeds amongst the wheat. When both sprouted God chooses to preserve all the wheat, dealing with the weeds at the harvest time. This is because the roots of the darnel weed and wheat have become entangles and to rip on out would be to tear both from the good ground. Sounds familiar, for aren't our lives a tangle of wheat and weeds, too? For God and for our good, patience and mercy always wins the day.

A gardener plants a tiny mustard seed which when nurtured and cared for gradually grows into a sheltering tree, a home for the birds of the air. The Kingdom is growing from little acts of care and kindness, too, slowly but

surely making a place of shade from the heat and shelter for all who pass through this world. A woman in her kitchen takes a large quantity of flour, the fruit of the wheat, mixes it with a small amount of yeast, kneads and rests it until it's leavened all though until it's ready for baking and for feeding her big family. The bread needs the flour, but without the yeast of God's powerful love and the work put into the making and baking it can't feed and fill us. Often unacknowledged, God is in the kitchen with us adding the yeast of hope and kindness, helping us to make something meaningful and alive out of ingredients so static and so small.

In the Kingdom of Heaven story which is the story of our faith we're never alone. God is working hard for us and with us in times both good and bad. God is sowing, gardening, nurturing, mixing and baking up a storm within us, active in the world and in the events and challenges of these fractured times in which we find ourselves. Not everything will go without a hitch as the parable of darnel and wheat teaches, but for God the perfect is never allowed to become the enemy of the good, something we must remember when we feel our human weakness and fall. As St. Paul reminds us, when we don't even know what to say or to pray, God's Spirit expresses our pleas in ways that are in tune with the mind and will of God, for God knows perfectly well what is within our hearts. Let's have hope and a heart of faith then, for the Lord is always merciful, good and forgiving towards us so that the Kingdom may come just as God desires.