

Father Rudy's Reflections

July 25, 2023

The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Parable of the Weeds

Jesus tells us it is not for us to judge

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

During these two weeks, both last week and today, we are discussing a parable about the Sower and the Seed and the necessity for good soil for seed to grow and thrive. Today, in Matthew's Gospel, we listen to another parable about the sower, but this time with a twist, one that introduces the concept of weeds that might ultimately damage his crop. The Parable of the Weeds is focused on total yield and the ultimate harvest ahead. The sower, who planted his seeds on good soil initially, is later plagued with weeds that grow among his crop and attempt to overtake the wheat he has implanted. The parable also discusses the time in which the weeds might be extracted from the crop; he decides it should be done not immediately but when the crop is ultimately harvested. Symbolically in this parable, Jesus is the sower; the world is the field; we (as the children of God) are the good seed; the devil is the evil one and his children are the weeds; the final judgment of man is the harvest; and the angels are the harvesters.

There is an important concept in this Gospel on which to reflect: not only on how we live our lives, and through our choices, might damage our salvation, but also and possibly more importantly, the way in which we are inclined to judge others whom we might disagree with, find fault with, or criticize. Judging the hearts, minds, and motives of other people falls under the sin of pride, and it surely wounds our souls as well as those around us. As it is pointed out in Jesus's parable, we are not to judge others, as difficult as that may be to embrace; God is the ultimate judge, and he will let earthly life run its course among "the weeds" to be adjudicated at the end of time at his sole discretion. There will be a judgment day, but it is not for us to weigh in on the matter.

How many families are estranged because someone doesn't agree with another family member's lifestyle, decisions, opinions, behavior, or at times, just the way they part their hair? It's that superficial—"Your way is not my way"—and thus the rift is provoked, established, and often irreparable. The result: grandparents don't see grandchildren, brothers distance themselves from sisters, lifelong friends walk away. What good comes of it, except wounded and damaged people? Yes, we might have stood our ground and yanked out the presumed weed, but the crop, oh, the crop fails regardless. What a shame.

"Those who look well after their own consciences rarely fall into the sin of judging others."

—St. Francis de Sales

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy