

From the PASTOR'S DESK

What to Do with the Weeds

What should we do about the weeds? That's one of the issues Jesus addresses in today's Gospel. Through this parable, He confronts a problem the Church has faced in every age – including today's.

Weeds have a habit of growing among any seeds we have planted, no matter how well we've prepared the soil. They seem to be more robust than our plants; they are an unwanted, destructive nuisance.

The agricultural parables of the gospels are usually variations on the theme of sowing the Word of God. Applying this to the Church here on earth, it's obvious that the Church is a mixture of good and bad people. We know very well that serious sinners can do great harm to good people. Their behavior can be a scandal leading others to want nothing to do with religion.

In the light of this parable, how should the Church deal with threats to the Good News being sown and taking root. Can we weed out destructive sinners, and then hope that the Church will consist of only good, holy people? With no room for sinners, can we become an elite band of faithful followers of the Word?

In this parable, that's not Christ's approach. Like the wise farmer, He realizes that in pulling out the weeds, there can be more harm than good. While there are obvious exceptions for truly harmful people, a ruthless reaction can be counter-productive. Like the wise farmer, Jesus urges patience. Jesus takes up the perspectives of the farmer in several agricultural parables. The first view focuses on sowing and growing. The second on harvesting, judging, and sorting. We are living in the first era of the Kingdom of God. We have a mixture of good and bad people, saints and sinners. We can be mistaken in distinguishing one from the other. We don't want to uproot the good with the bad, or even instead of the bad.

Jesus sees God's delay in passing judgment and sorting out the bad as a sign of His loving mercy. He wants to give the sinner the grace and the time to repent and become a saint. The Lord of the Harvest will pass the final judgment. We believe in His loving mercy and vindicating justice.

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