

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME(YEAR A)

HOMILY BY FATHER MARAIAH

Today's readings tell us about a very patient and compassionate God who is hopeful that the so-called "weeds" among us will be converted. They warn us that we should not be in a hurry to eliminate such elements from the Church or society or the family based on unwarranted and hasty judgment. (An anecdote may be added)

The first reading from the Book of Wisdom shows us a merciful and patient God, rather than the disciplining and punishing God presented in the book of Genesis. The second reading from Romans reminds us that the Spirit of God constantly empowers us in our prayers and in our weakness. So, we should be patient with ourselves and with others. Finally, in the Gospel *parable of the wheat and the weeds*, Jesus presents a wise and patient God who allows the good and the evil to coexist in the world and blesses the evil ones for the little good they may have done, so that they may come to conversion before their time ends. "*Let the wheat and the weeds [darnel] grow together till the harvest time.*" In other words, God awaits repentant sinners, giving them the strength and good will to get reconciled with Him. God calmly recognizes that there is evil in the world, but He sees that evil is no excuse for the good people not to do good with the power of God at their disposal. Through the parable of the wheat and the weeds in today's Gospel, Jesus calls us to be patient with those who fail to meet the high ethical standard expected of a Christian.

Life messages: 1) We need to practice patience and show mercy. Let us patiently and lovingly treat the "weeds" in our society as our brothers and sisters and do all in our power to put them back on the right road to Heaven, especially by our good example, encouragement and our fervent prayer for their conversion. Let us remember that most of us have been "weeds" in God's field more than once, and God has showed us mercy. God is so merciful that He allows evil to exist in order that what is good may grow. He allows evil to exist also because He can turn it into good. Through the power of the Spirit, God can change even the ugliest thorn into a blossom of Faith. In God's field, we have two responsibilities: to grow in grace or God's favor and to share

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His Word and love with others. 2) We need to grow up as healthy wheat in God's field, leaving the "weeds" for God to take care of. The Good News is that growth and maturity are probably the most effective forms of weed control. Our transparent and exemplary Christian lives will be a compelling challenge and a forceful invitation to evildoers to repent of their sinful lives and turn to a loving and forgiving God. Our acts of charity, kindness, mercy, encouragement, loving correction and selfless service can prompt the "weeds" in our society to reassess their lives, modify them and become useful members of society