

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jul 23rd 2017

For today's readings, I am very fond of agricultural parables because our family lives the farm life so it helps me relate. With regard to the wheat and weeds parable, my husband will do whatever he can to get rid of any and all weeds. If not, the weeds take over the entire crop. Weeds are powerful. I am comforted by today's Gospel reading in that God knows the bigger picture and in His mercy allows for weeds and wheat to co-exist. God's power is kind. The power of the enemy is not. ("And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind;" Wisdom 12:19) The power that comes from the weeds provides temptations which lead many of us into sin. Sin damages our relationship with ourselves, our community and God. The good news is that God always allows us the opportunity to repent.

There is an example of the cycle of temptation, sin, repentance and deliverance in a book I read this past week while meditating on today's Scripture readings. Monsignor Bill Whelan, a priest here in the Omaha Archdiocese, wrote about his experiences as "An Ordinary Priest Gifted by God's Grace." He conducted a healing ministry for many years in the 1980's. I heard of Msg. Whelan from a friend whose daughter was physically healed by God through Msg. Whelan's healing ministry. God's healing ministry is all encompassing. It includes physical, spiritual and emotional. The spiritual enrichment I received from reading his book has been immense.

The book is filled with a collection of stories that give witness to the many graces bestowed on us. As we know, with the co-existence of wheat and weeds, there will always be the evil side. Msg. Whelan relayed his experience of responding to the call of four young girls who needed guidance. During a sleep over, they got the Ouija Board out, hoping to get in touch with the spirits. Like so many of us, our curiosity takes us in the direction of partaking in activities that seem exciting and unknowing.

These four girls not only were able to get in touch with spirits but were dealing with bad consequences. The spirits would not leave these four girls alone and the girls had become hysterical. Msg. Whelan provided direction and asked them if they were sorry, if they wanted to become confirmed and if they wanted to commit themselves to Christ. They answered yes to all three, received peace and completed the cycle of temptation, sin, repentance and deliverance. There is a popular hypnotist medium coming to Omaha. My prayer for "whoever has ears ought to hear" (Mt. 13:43) comes from today's reading:

Brothers and sisters: The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will. (Romans 8:26-27)

While wheat and weeds continue to co-exist, there will continue to be truth and holiness all tangled up with sin, injustice and error.

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious,

slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity. (Psalm 86:9-10)

An update on my last reflection of May 31, 2017, on behalf of the Creighton community we would like

to express our sincere thanks for the warm and prayerful responses received. For those who did lose their positions here at Creighton, please know that you will continue to be in the thoughts and prayers of many.

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