

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY – ORD. (A)
THE LORD IS GOOD AND FORGIVING

July 22/23, 2023

What is my idea about God? How important is the kingdom of heaven to me? The author of the book of Wisdom throws light on who God is and what He does. There is no god beside Him and He cares for all. He is the master of all and the source of justice. He judges with clemency, and He governs with lenience. God gives hope to His people, and he hopes that people would repent for their sins. This is what the Psalmist is also saying: “You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon you...For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; you alone are God. You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity”.

The mercy and kindness of God are expressed in concrete terms by Jesus’s own life and in the parable of the wheat and the weeds. The master told the slaves not to pull the weeds but to let them grow together. This means God is patient and He allows both the righteous and sinners to grow together till the end of time. Unlike the weeds which would remain weeds, human beings have the opportunity to change from bad to good. So, God gives His children the opportunity to repent, and that was what Wisdom is talking about.

Jesus reminds us how insignificant the kingdom of heaven may seem to be to many people, but it will later turn out to be the greatest and most important of everything one can think of. The initial nature of the kingdom may make people not look for it but run after visible worldly things which will not last. Nothing on earth can be compared with the kingdom of heaven in terms of peace, joy and happiness, comfort and rest, and the upright will find it.

The Lord Jesus reminds us that we have been given the chance to think about our lives and to change for the better. Every day is an opportunity to repent. Even though God is merciful and kind, a time will come when evildoers will be thrown into the fire. The justice of God will be manifested at that time. He will be just to all according what we have done with the time given to reconcile with Him.

Jesus tells us that the field on which the seeds are sown is the world. You and I are in the world now. He wants me to be good and be part of the

kingdom, so He has endowed me with all the graces I need. Do I belong to the children of the kingdom, or working hard to be one? Or have I no intention to be one? Do I want to belong to the devil because of the pleasant things he promises?

Those who will experience hell fire are not only those who sin, but also those who cause people to sin. I should be aware of this and be careful about what I do and say. Sometimes, I may think that my life is mine and has nothing to do with anybody, and so I can do whatever I feel like doing. St. Paul told the Romans: "It is best to abstain from eating any meat, or drinking any wine, or from other activity which might cause a brother to fall away, or to be scandalized, or to weaken" (Rom.14:21), and also to the Corinthians: "Never be a cause of offense, either to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God" (1Cor.10:32).

When I get up every day the message for me is to correct what I did wrong the previous day. It is to do the good I couldn't do the previous day. I am reminded of what will happen to the righteous, that they will shine like the sun, and so, I should try to hunger and thirst for uprightness. The message about the wheat and the weeds is to remind me that I should not allow myself to be drawn into doing evil because of the prosperity of wicked people. This is some advice from the Psalmist: "Do not fret because of the wicked; do not envy those who do evil: for they wither quickly like grass and fade like the green of the fields. If you trust in the Lord and do good, then you will live in the land and be secure. The just man's few possessions are better than the wicked man's wealth" (Ps.37:1-4&16). Do I want to change from weeds to wheat or remain as weeds?