

HOMILY 16TH Sunday Ordinary Time

July 19, 2026

We are now in the middle of our summer, and our gardeners are now doing gardening that is not always fun. We are pulling weeds. Sometimes it is difficult to tell the weeds from the flowers. I read about a couple of tips that I want to share with you. If you are not sure if it is a weed or a flower, pull it out. If it comes out easily it is a flower. Another way to tell the flowers from the weeds is to simply pull everything out. What grows back are the weeds.

Today in the Gospel reading we hear another parable. A parable is a form of analogy that seeks to illuminate one reality by appealing to something better known. The example that Jesus uses is planting a wheat field. It was well known at the time that if you wanted to sabotage someone's wheat field you could do that by secretly planting darnel. In fact, there was a Roman law against that. When the weed first sprouts, you cannot tell the difference between the wheat and the darnel. By the time you can differentiate them, the roots are so intertwined that if you pull out the darnel, you will also pull out the wheat. So, you must wait until harvest time and then you can separate the darnel from the wheat. I think Jesus is telling us that if we plant good seed, we will bear good fruit. We should not try to judge which plants are the weeds. We cannot always tell, so we should leave that judgement to God.

There are all kinds of people in the world. Each one of us is a unique creation of God. God created us in his own image and likeness, he gave us a free will and he allows us to exercise it. God is very patient with us. He does not control us, but he tries to guide us, give us little warning signs along the way and sometimes he gives us big alarms, and we have to decide if we are going to follow his lead. He is a God of second chances, and third chances and fourth chances. He can see our potential and he keeps loving us. I think we need to follow God's example.

Sometimes we are quick to judge, and sometimes those judgements are absolute. Things and people are good or bad, and we just want to pull out the weeds. But that is not true. Things and people are a combination of both. The Church is not perfect because it is

made up of human beings who sometimes make mistakes. That is why our liturgies and our church teachings are dynamic. They change over time when we learn things. I am saddened by the people who leave the church because of disagreement over something that has happened or a particular teaching. We need to continue the discussions and make changes where they are needed. The church is slow to change and sometimes that is good. Maybe that is one reason why it has lasted for 2,000 years.

We need to stop judging people as all good or all bad. We are a combination of both. We have to stop judging people by the worst thing they have ever done. And we all have our own shortcomings. We are more patient with our own because we know the reasons why we have them. We rarely know someone so well that we really understand why they are doing what they are doing, so withhold judgement. Sometimes as Church people when we see someone doing something that we do not think is right, we want to judge them and correct them. We need to be very hesitant in doing that. Many years ago, I read a survey where people said they would not go to the Church for help because they felt they were more likely to be judged than to be helped. That has stayed with me through the years. I talked to someone recently who has a gay relative who left the Catholic Church because he said, “the Catholic Church did not want me,” so he went to a Christian church that did. I have talked to many people who stopped going to church when they got divorced. They told me that they no longer felt welcome. Do we want to be that Church?

The other reason why we have to stop judging people is because once we pass a negative judgement, we are distancing ourselves from them and we will never have a meaningful relationship with them. We need to continue to live and interact with one another and get different points of view. Frequently I do not agree with things that are being done but if I have no control over the decisions. I take the attitude of, “let’s see how this plays out.” I may be wrong and I believe that the good always eventually rise to the top in the end.

So, let’s just stop judging one another and live together like the dandelion and the wheat. Let God be the judge at harvest time. That is his job.