

# Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time  
July 20, 2008

**READING 1: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19**

You gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.

**Psalm 86**

Lord, you are good and forgiving.

**READING 2: Romans 8:26-27**

The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 13:24-30**

He said, "No, if you pull the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them."

Jesus spoke this parable to people who believed that their lives could be perfect. What do you think?

The people came to Jesus sighing, crying, and dying. They wanted him to cure them. They believed that if he would just heal their leprosy, or drive away the demons, or raise the dead, their lives finally would be perfect and they would be happy. Actually, they were so caught up in their desires for healing; they didn't recognize the One who did the healing. They encountered the living God who was sharing the Divine wisdom as only God could and they didn't listen. They encountered the living God, the only one who could put them in touch with their own grandeur, and they didn't see. Jesus is the living God enfleshed; they had the greatest opportunity in all history, and they didn't get it.

It's been two thousand years. We're better educated, more sophisticated, the farming analogies don't necessarily resonate, but how different are we really? Each one of us has a notion of what would clear out the weeds from our lives. We come to Jesus and ask for perfect lives. We say: "If only my wife didn't have cancer; if only my husband didn't have heart disease; if only my husband was interested in what I have to say and listen; if only my wife would tell me she appreciates how hard I work; if only my daughter would stop using drugs; if only my son would get a job and move out." It goes on. These are all worthy prayers and so are your own.

If you remember, Jesus heard the people's prayers and he did heal their leprosy and other diseases, drive out the demons and even raise the widow's dead son and others. Jesus does hear our prayers. The point is, the weeds in our lives are not what impede our happiness. When we focus, obsess even, on the weeds we miss the opportunity to encounter the living God. We will never be happy if we are making our happiness dependent upon a weed eater rather than the creator. Does this make sense to you?

I believe that God created us with grandeur beyond our wildest dreams but we can miss out as surely as the people who took the cure but crucified the healer. Whether it was in the womb or before, God placed happiness within us. But we look for something outside ourselves to make us happy. I believe that whether it was in the womb or before, God placed love within us, but we think another person will generate love for us. I believe that whether it was in the womb or before, God placed a longing for God within us, but we transfer that longing onto other conditions. Jesus tried to tell people. He said, don't be afraid, God loves you and won't let you down. He said God knows you, knows every hair on your head, you are worth far more than a sparrow and he knows when every sparrow falls from the sky. Maybe it was too much of a stretch for poor subsistence farmers of old Palestine to understand. But if we could just take this into our hearts and minds and souls, it would make all the difference.

When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in this Eucharist we approach with all our hopes and dreams and love and faith. We don't want to miss out on the healer, the giver of life because we are so wrapped up in the immediate desires we are praying for. Come on, receive life from the only source Who makes sense and see how all the rest falls into place. Come receive and experience the Good News!

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