

Order for Liturgy of the Word

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Entrance Antiphon: Leader

See, I have God for my help. The Lord sustains my soul. I will sacrifice to you with willing heart, and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good. Ps 54 (53): 6, 8

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sisters and Brothers, God desires to converse with us through his Word. Let us bless him for his goodness. Blessed be God forever. **Response:** Blessed be God forever.

Introduction: Leader

We gather today to celebrate the Lord's Day. One with our sisters and brothers and the entire Church, we will listen to God's Word and join in prayer. So, as we prepare to hear of God's love poured out through Christ, let us acknowledge that He is the source of pardon and strength:

Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us to one another and to the Father; Lord, have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division: Christ, have mercy.

Response: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you intercede for us with your Father; Lord, have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: In acknowledgement and thanksgiving for God's mercy we offer our praise:

All: The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to men of good will. We praise You. We bless You. We adore you. We glorify You. We give You thanks for Your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God the almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only-begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the

Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

First reading: A reading from the Book of Wisdom: 12:13, 16-19

There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all. For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity. But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you. And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.

The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm Ps 86: 5-6, 9-10, 15-16

R. (5a) Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O LORD, are good and forgiving, abounding in kindness to all who call upon you. Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my pleading.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship you, O LORD, and glorify your name. For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; you alone are God.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity. Turn toward me, and have pity on me; give your strength to your servant.

R. Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Second reading:

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans:

8: 26-27

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.

The word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God

Gospel acclamation:

R. Alleluia, alleluia: Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. **R.** Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel proclamation:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

13: 24-43

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

He proposed another parable to them. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.'"

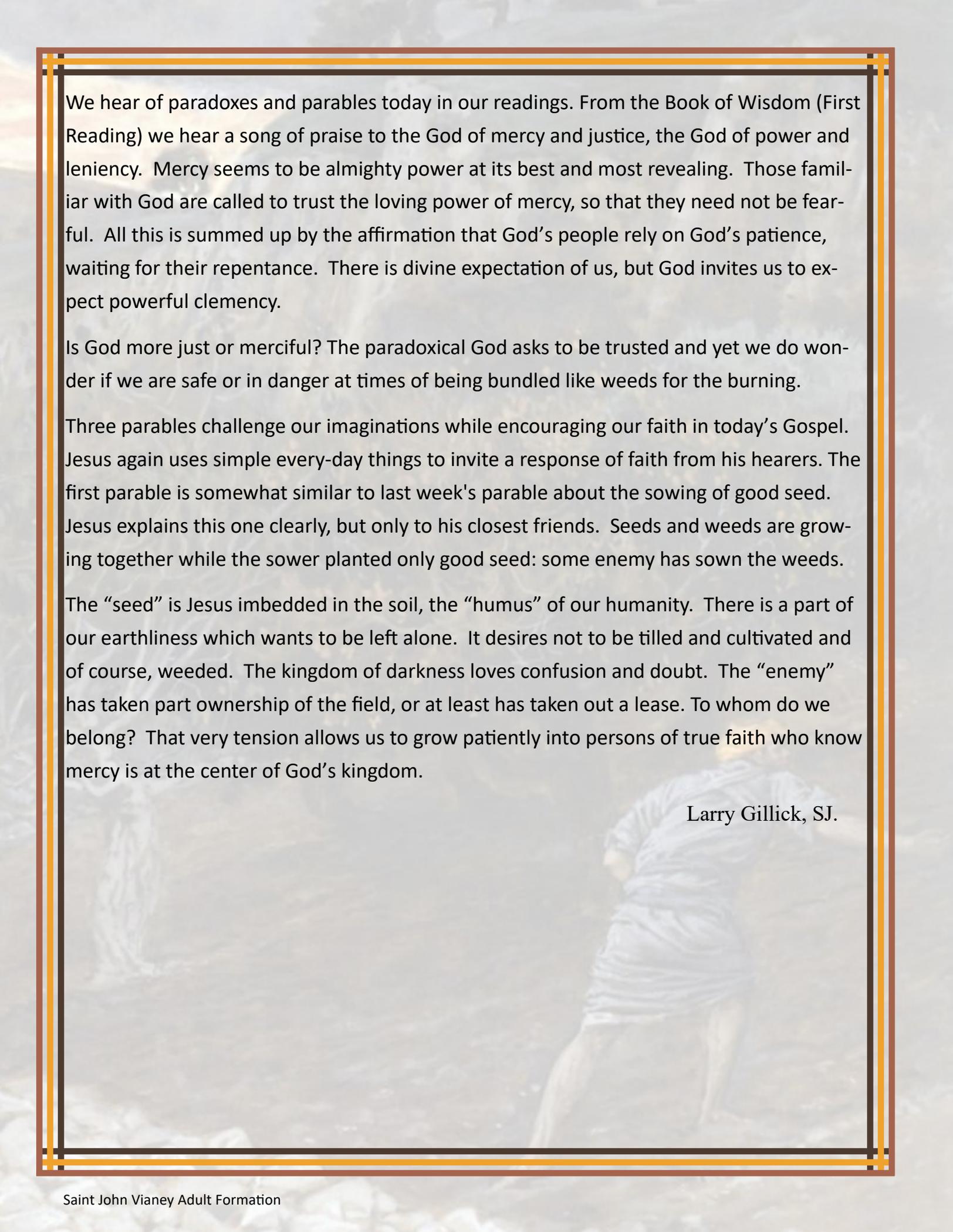
He spoke to them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened."

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: *I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.*

Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." He said in reply, "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear."

The Gospel of the Lord. **R.** Praise to you, lord Jesus Christ.





We hear of paradoxes and parables today in our readings. From the Book of Wisdom (First Reading) we hear a song of praise to the God of mercy and justice, the God of power and leniency. Mercy seems to be almighty power at its best and most revealing. Those familiar with God are called to trust the loving power of mercy, so that they need not be fearful. All this is summed up by the affirmation that God's people rely on God's patience, waiting for their repentance. There is divine expectation of us, but God invites us to expect powerful clemency.

Is God more just or merciful? The paradoxical God asks to be trusted and yet we do wonder if we are safe or in danger at times of being bundled like weeds for the burning.

Three parables challenge our imaginations while encouraging our faith in today's Gospel. Jesus again uses simple every-day things to invite a response of faith from his hearers. The first parable is somewhat similar to last week's parable about the sowing of good seed. Jesus explains this one clearly, but only to his closest friends. Seeds and weeds are growing together while the sower planted only good seed: some enemy has sown the weeds.

The "seed" is Jesus imbedded in the soil, the "humus" of our humanity. There is a part of our earthliness which wants to be left alone. It desires not to be tilled and cultivated and of course, weeded. The kingdom of darkness loves confusion and doubt. The "enemy" has taken part ownership of the field, or at least has taken out a lease. To whom do we belong? That very tension allows us to grow patiently into persons of true faith who know mercy is at the center of God's kingdom.

Larry Gillick, SJ.

Having listened to God's word in these passages from Holy Scripture we now profess our faith in all that He has revealed:

All—Profession of Faith:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate, he suffered
death and was buried, and rose

again on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the
Son,

Who with the Father and the Son is
adored and glorified, who has spoken
through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins and I look
forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful—Leader

Introduction: Lord, our ears have heard of your plans of glory for us. We desire to be wheat among the weeds and shed on the whole world the radiance of the Gospel message and so we ask for your help as we pray:

Intentions:

For the Church: that we allow the good seed of the Gospel to take root within us and bring forth a harvest of virtue and manifestations of the reign of God; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For openness of mind and heart: that the parables of Jesus may help us recognize the limits of our vision and understanding, and move us toward examining our life and actions from new perspectives; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For healing and transformation of our weaknesses: that the Spirit of God will work within us to bring us to wholeness in the areas in which we are most wounded and vulnerable; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For all who are bound by hatred and resentment: that the Spirit will cultivate forgiveness and compassion within their hearts and wither the weeds of revenge, violence and destruction; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For an end to the pandemic of illness, anxiety, and social tension; that God's reign of justice and peace will be cultivated in our hearts and in all the structures of our society; we pray to the Lord. **Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

For those who have died: may angels carry them into the presence of God and they shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; we pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer: Lord, help us to grow healthy and strong in faith so that we are gathered up when you harvest and separate the weeds from the wheat. With a Spirit of thanksgiving for the blessings you bestow upon us we ask this, and all that we have placed before you, through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Leader: Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Leader: With the love of Christ, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Leader: Communion Antiphon:

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful, has made a memorial of his wonders; he gives food to those who fear him. Ps 111 (110): 4-5

All—Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Leader: Prayer After Communion

Graciously be present to your people, we pray, O Lord, and lead those you have imbued with heavenly mysteries to pass from former ways to newness of life. Through Christ our Lord. **Response:** Amen.

Blessing—making the sign of the cross:

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Response: Amen.

Leader: Let us go in peace.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Closing Thoughts

Matthew is very concerned in his gospel with the unity of the Christian community. He does not envision the Church as an exclusionary organization, but rather as an inclusive community which is guided by the spirit of the parable of the weeds.

“Let them grow together until harvest” (Gospel): since its earliest days, the Church has preferred to tolerate different levels of commitment and holiness. Such an attitude is in line with the “wisdom” of the Hebrew Scriptures, which informs us that “those who are righteous must be kind; and you gave your children reason to hope that you would allow them to repent for their sins.” (First Reading)

This attitude of acceptance is also in line with the revelation of God “as merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness.”

An inclusive Church that is kind and lenient toward its own members and toward everyone else should be an inspiration to a divided world that has a tendency to judge harshly, to be quick to anger, and to uproot weeds even at the cost of damage to the good plants.

*By virtue of her mission to shed on the whole world the radiance of the gospel message, and to unify under one Spirit all men of whatever nation, race, or culture, the Church stands forth as a sign of that brotherliness which allows honest dialogue and invigorates it. **

Such a mission requires in the first place that we foster within the Church herself mutual esteem, reverence, and harmony, through the full recognition of lawful diversity.

* Vatican II, [Constitution on the Church in the Modern World](#)

From *To Love and To Serve: Lectionary Based Meditations* by Gerald Darring

Art: *The Enemy Who Sows* by James Tissot