

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Healing is not simply about understanding where we came from. It is about learning to live differently today. We gain insight into the roles we learned in childhood, the ways we protected ourselves, and the beliefs we carried into adulthood. Yet insight alone does not transform us. Lasting change comes as God reshapes the patterns that once helped us survive but now keep us from living freely.

This Sunday's gospel speaks directly to this process through the parable of the weeds and the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30). Jesus describes a field where good seed has been planted, but during the night an enemy sows weeds among the wheat. When both begin to grow, the servants want to remove the weeds. The master responds, *"No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest."*

For many adult children, this parable touches one of the deepest wounds we carry. Growing up in dysfunction, we learned to define ourselves by the roles we played rather than by our identity as beloved sons and daughters of God. We became the caretaker, the hero, the scapegoat, the lost child, or the people pleaser. Over time, these survival strategies began to feel like who we are. Recovery reveals that they are not our identity. They are ways we learned to survive. The weeds are real, but they are not the wheat.

This changes how we approach healing. Instead of attacking ourselves every time old patterns surface, we learn to respond with honesty, humility, and compassion. We acknowledge our reactions without allowing them to define us. Instead of asking, "What is wrong with me?" we begin

asking, "What is God inviting me to learn here?" That shift opens the door to transformation.

The second reading offers reassurance in this work. Saint Paul reminds us that the Spirit intercedes for us because God searches hearts and knows what is unfolding within us (Romans 8:26-27). Even when we struggle to understand ourselves, God sees the whole picture. He knows the wounds we carry, the healing already taking place, and the person we are becoming through His grace.

Recovery slogans offer simple wisdom for this path. "Progress, not perfection" reminds us that growth takes time. "Easy does it" helps us slow down when old fears push us to react. "First things first" calls us back to our own healing instead of trying to manage everyone else's emotions. "Let go and let God" invites us to release what was never ours to control.

The Twelve Steps support this patient work. We learn to tell the truth about our past without becoming trapped there. We examine fears, resentments, grief, and distorted beliefs, not to condemn ourselves but to become free. Daily inventory, prayer, healthy relationships, and honest fellowship gradually replace survival strategies with healthier ways of living.

As growth continues, changes appear in ordinary moments. We become less reactive and more present. We set boundaries without guilt, receive love without suspicion, and face conflict without immediately returning to old roles. These changes rarely happen all at once, but they reveal that God has been cultivating good soil within us.

The parable of the weeds and the wheat reminds us that healing is neither rushed nor forced. God has never confused

our wounds with our identity. He knows the difference between the survival strategies we learned and the beloved son or daughter He created us to be. As we continue in recovery, we are invited to trust His patient work and allow the wheat He planted to grow stronger than the weeds that once seemed to define us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which old survival pattern are you most tempted to mistake for your identity rather than recognizing it as something God is healing?
- How has recovery helped you distinguish between who you learned to become and who God created you to be?
- Where do you see evidence that God has been patiently cultivating growth in your life, even while some old patterns remain?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

RESP. PS. Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

SECOND READING Romans 8:26-27

GOSPEL Matthew 13:24-43