

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

There is a stage in family recovery when we begin to recognize that healing is not only about what happens in the life of our loved one, it is also about what God is doing within us. We may attend meetings, pray faithfully, and work toward healthier relationships, yet still find ourselves pulled back into old habits of worry, control, resentment, or fear. Recovery gradually teaches us that our own spiritual growth deserves the same attention we have often given to someone else's struggles.

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

This parable speaks to one of the greatest challenges in family recovery. We naturally want to remove whatever is causing pain. We want our loved one to make better choices, embrace recovery, and experience lasting freedom. When progress seems slow or setbacks occur, we can become discouraged or feel responsible for fixing what is happening. Yet Jesus reminds us that growth unfolds according to God's timing, not ours.

Recovery invites us to shift our attention away from managing another person's life and toward tending the condition of our own hearts. This is not selfishness. It is faithful stewardship. We cannot cultivate another person's relationship with God, but we can remain attentive to our own. As we do, we become healthier, wiser, and better able to love without becoming consumed by fear.

This is where familiar recovery slogans offer lasting wisdom. "First things first" reminds us that our relationship with God comes before our desire to control circumstances. "Progress, not perfection" helps us accept that both we and those we love grow gradually. "Easy does it" encourages patience when emotions run high, while "Let go and let God" reminds us that we are not responsible for another person's recovery.

The second reading offers reassurance in moments when we feel uncertain. Saint Paul tells us that God searches hearts and knows "what is the intention of the Spirit" (Romans 8:26-27). God sees what we cannot. He understands the struggles, wounds, and desires hidden within every person. This frees us from believing that we must judge another person's progress or determine how God is working in their life.

The Twelve Steps reinforce this same movement. We examine our own attitudes, fears, and resentments rather than becoming preoccupied with someone else's shortcomings. We learn to establish healthy boundaries, speak truth with love, and entrust outcomes to God. This does not mean withdrawing from relationships. Rather, it allows us to love with greater freedom because our peace no longer depends on another person's choices.

Over time, we begin to notice real growth within ourselves. We become less reactive when circumstances change. We listen more carefully before responding. We pray more readily when we used to panic. Compassion begins to replace resentment, and hope gradually overcomes discouragement. These changes often happen quietly, but they bear lasting fruit.

The parable of the weeds and the wheat reminds us that God is patient with every heart, including our own. As we continue in family recovery, we are invited to trust His timing, tend the soil

He has entrusted to us, and believe that He is faithfully at work, even when we cannot yet see the harvest.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where do you find yourself trying to "pull the weeds" in another person's life instead of tending the condition of your own heart?

- Which recovery slogan speaks most directly to your current situation, and how might you practice it this week?

- How has God been cultivating patience, trust, or healthier boundaries in your recovery?

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