

16th Sunday of the Year A

**First Reading** Wisdom 12:13.16-19

There is no god, other than you, who cares for everything, to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly. Your justice has its source in strength, your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all. You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned and you expose the insolence of those who know it; but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgement, you govern us with great lenience, for you have only to will, and your power is there. By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men, and you have given your sons the good hope that after sin you will grant repentance.

**Second Reading** Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

**Gospel** Matthew 13:24-30

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servant went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?' 'Some enemy has done this,' he answered. And the servant said, 'Do you want us to go and weed it out?' But he said, 'No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn.'"

**Meditation**

The temptation to restrict the Church to the perfect has always haunted the Christian community, animated as it is by a high ideal of holiness. To conquer evil has sometimes been interpreted as meaning to destroy sinners. Many a "holy war" has been fought in the name of Christian righteousness. Even James and John wanted to command fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans (Lk 9:54). Yet the God who has the power to wreak destruction on the wicked rules instead with leniency. In his parables of the kingdom, Jesus teaches his impatient followers that the Lord of the harvest is more concerned with the growth of the wheat than with the elimination of the weeds. The time for separation and for burning will come, but it is not now. Today's readings call the servants of God's kingdom to share in the patient tolerance of the kingdom's Lord. Rather than devoting our energies to hunting out and destroying every sign of deviation, we are urged to nurture every sign of goodness in the world. To foster the growth of what is good is in itself to overcome evil.