



“The Weeds and the Wheat”

Driving to Masses in John Day, Monument, and Dale on the weekend of July 19th and 20th, I had a lot of time to ponder the Gospel of the Weeds and the Wheat.

Jesus’ parable tells of a man who sowed good seed in his field only to find it half-filled with weeds as the crop matured. “Where have the weeds come from?” his servants asked. “An enemy has done this,” the man replied. Right he was. “While everyone was asleep, his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off.”

“Where have the weeds come from?” It’s a live question still, whether we think of the blood-soaked “field” Syria has become or of the root-tangled “field” of family disintegration around us. We too ask what keeps the good seed of human solidarity from coming to fruition. “Where have the weeds come from?” The answer hasn’t changed: “An enemy has done this.”

The owner in the parable stands for God, whose “field” is the world he created, the world of space and time. Space in its entirety belongs to God; there exists no space in the universe beyond the reach of His providence. Time belongs to Him too. It came forth from Him and to Him it returns. God has all the time in the world. Like the owner in the parable, He will not rush the day of decisive separation. He can afford to wait for the harvest—and He does.

In stark contrast, the Enemy cannot accept the world God created. It is intolerable

to Satan that he has no “field” of his own in which to sow the bad seed of his hatefulness. The only field available to him is God’s, and he must sow his seed in it under the cover of darkness when human vigilance falters. For the other basic dimension of God’s creation hems him in as well. “[T]he devil has come down to you in great wrath,” the Book of Revelation tells us, “because *he knows that his time is short!*” Satan cannot afford to wait. He must get his way *now!*

To do so the Enemy sows the bad seed of rebelliousness. It puts down roots of *impatience*, sends up a stem of *harshness*, and yields the bitter fruit of *discord*. Isn’t that how it works with us? First we lose patience with ourselves or with others for doing or not doing something. Then we react harshly to an innocent inquiry. Soon weeds of discord spring up all around us.

It’s different with God’s sowing. The good seed of His Kingdom puts down roots of *patience*, comes to light in the stem of *kindness*, and flourishes in *peace*. We find this sequence in the first three Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. Mary’s “Be it done unto me” at the Annunciation discloses the uncomplaining patience at the heart of her pregnancy. The Visitation manifests the patient one’s kindness to Elizabeth. With the Birth of the Lord, his Mother rests in the sleep of “heavenly peace.”

Patience, kindness, and peace—these are what God’s sowing produces in the welcoming soil of a Christian soul. If we really want good seed to grow, these are the virtues to cultivate.