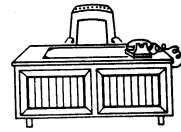


16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 19, 2020



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

Most people will admit that watching, listening or reading the news is often depressing. Daily news has become a litany of tragedies in one form or another, far and near. There is news of people killed in reckless drunk driving accidents! News of armed robberies and other criminal activities often with fatal results! News of natural disasters like wild fires, storms, earthquakes and mudslides that claim human lives! We also hear news of fatalities associated with parents leaving their children in vehicles in 90 degrees temperatures with windows rolled up. Not to mention the numerous tragic news associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

These tragedies are not made up by the news networks but are actual tragedies that significantly impact people's lives. One gets the sense that the world is a very dangerous place to live and no one is safe anywhere. We are often compelled to ask: Why is there so much evil around us? Why does God allow terrible things to happen? Why didn't God do a better job creating the world?

These questions are not unique to our time in history. The people of Jesus' time who experienced the severe oppression of the Roman Emperors, the ravaging effects of poverty, disease and natural disasters, asked similar questions. For the sake of those tempted to blame God for human tragedies, Jesus addresses the parable of the weeds in today's gospel. The parable likens the kingdom of God to a master who sowed wheat in his field, but an enemy came at night and sowed weeds.

Darnel, the weed referred to in the gospel, looks exactly like wheat. When the plant is young, it is almost impossible to distinguish it from wheat. It is easier to distinguish them when they are fully grown. That explains why the master in our gospel parable told the servants not to pull the weeds until harvest time. At harvest time, it will be easier to tell them apart by their fruits. The weed will be collected first and burnt, while the wheat is harvested for the kingdom.

By this parable Jesus shows that God is not the source of evil. Rather, evil is the work of the enemy who prefers to work at night. So often, we come across people who have stopped going to church or who simply walked away from God due to some past tragedy for which they hold God responsible. Their reasoning is the same age-old logic: If God is all good, why did he permit such and such tragedy despite their prayers? Jesus makes clear that God is not the source of evil. Some tragedies are due to human choices and human error since God created us with the freedom to choose and act. Good choices have good results while bad choices have bad consequences. Some other tragedies are part of the order of nature.

The short parables of the mustard seed and the leaven illustrate the dynamic nature of faith and the kingdom. When a child or an adult is baptized, the seed of faith is planted in that person. When that seed is nurtured, it grows and blossoms to become an awesome tree that provides for the needs of those around it. The point is that God can work through us to produce surprising results. The God who created us also blessed us with so much potential. We have the potential to change the world for better for worst.

Human history is replete with stories of people who fully utilized their potentials to make the world a better place. That is true of people who invented the various technologies that have made life easier. It is true of the various writers who penned down ideas and thoughts that still inspire. It is also true of the saints who exemplify by their lives the human potential to be one with God. Every time we do something good, we are helping to counter the effects of evil.

Have a great week!

Fr. Romanus