

## 16A

*When the Parish priest was out visiting he came across an old man, a lapsed catholic with whom he lost his temper for abandoning his faith. That night, the priest dreamed that Almighty God was speaking to him concerning the same gentleman, 'I have put up with that old man for nearly seventy years,' said God, 'and you could not put up with him for even a few minutes.'*

We are warned in the parable not to pre-empt the judgement of God by setting ourselves up as Judge and Jury over those who appear, on the outside, to be living less than perfect lives. That doesn't at all mean that we shy away from bringing things up with people who are not acting in a proper manner. That's an act of charity. We're not 'weeding them out' but helping them to change direction for their ultimate good. Unlike the Parish Priest, in the opening story, we need to show patience with people.

Saint John XXIII, canonised recently, used to say that we must hate the sin but love the sinner. Fallen human nature has a tendency to lump the two together so much so that they become indistinguishable from each other. Some see euthanasia, for instance, as an act of 'compassion'. It seems they're calling dandelion, wheat and wheat, dandelion. Scripture tells us: 'woe to those who call evil good and good evil'.

Throughout history, on a global level, many examples of 'weeding out' come to mind. the weeding out of the Jews in World War II, apartheid in South Africa, ethnic clearing of Muslims from Serbia, Palestinian people walled in - all resulting in failure, misery and death. The fact that 'weeding out' has no history of success hasn't quelled man's passion for it. Albert Einstein said that *'insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results'*

And then there are individuals who embark on a moral campaign to 'reform' people's lives with little or no concern for the person's ultimate welfare or happiness. That is weeding out at its worse. Unfortunately these people have a tendency to uproot the wheat with the darnel. There's darnel in every organization, even the church. Mischievous people, however, tar everyone with the same brush because of the sins of a small few. That's another example of 'uprooting the wheat with the darnel'.

God doesn't discriminate between the good and bad people of this world. Scripture reminds us that 'he lets his sun shine and rain fall on good and bad people alike'. That doesn't mean he's not concerned whether we live good or bad lives, but God in his patience will give opportunities for change to everyone who needs it - and who doesn't. If we listen to Him, we might be more disposed to recognize the weeds within ourselves first before we start changing the world.

*To the question in today's Gospel, 'Do you want us to go and weed out the darnel'? The answer is a categorical 'No'. God will judge everyone with justice in his own time, where there will be no possibility of any mistakes. Life would be a lot better for everyone if we left it to Him.*