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In the course of his parish visiting the priest came across an elderly parishioner who had been neglecting his spiritual duties for many years. The old man seemed to be so indifferent towards God and the Church that the priest lost his rag completely and told him he was a pathetic Catholic. That night, the priest dreamed that Almighty God was speaking to him concerning the same old man, '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.'

The parable of the darnel and the wheat emphasises God's patience with the world. It seems He has much more tolerance with us than we have at times with Him or one another for that matter. We are warned in the parable not to pre-empt the judgement of God by being reckless in our judgements. This particularly applies to institutions. But it doesn't at all mean that we shy away from having a quiet word with someone who is not acting in a proper manner. Here we're not making rash and careless judgements about the person but dealing with a specific point of order.

Saint Pope John XXIII, used to say that we must hate the sin but love the sinner but we can easily fail to differentiate between the two. Some see euthanasia, for instance, as an act of 'compassion'. I have a feeling, in this instance, they're dressing up darnel as wheat. In the book of Isaiah it reads: '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 European Jewry in World War II, apartheid in South Africa, white farmers uprooted from Zimbabwe, 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'*. That rings true for the Middle East conflict.

And then there are individuals who embark on a moral crusade to 'reform' people's lives with little concern for the person or institutions they're targeting. Unfortunately they 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 very small few.

We're told to love people the way they are or in spite of the way they are. God doesn't differentiate in His love between the good and bad people of this world. Yes, He is calling us to repentance but never forcing our hand. Scripture reminds us that 'he lets his sun shine and rain fall on good and bad people alike'. He never ever writes anyone off His list. But we can voluntarily remove ourselves from His list.

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