



16th Sunday in Ordinary Time



Date: Sunday, July 19, 2026 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** A

First Reading: Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16–19

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 86:5–6, 9–10, 15–16 | **Response:** Psalm 86:5a

Second Reading: Romans 8:26–27

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:25

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:24–43

Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today Jesus asks us to stand against what is wrong without becoming cruel, to show mercy without ignoring the truth, and to believe that small acts of goodness can help God change the world.

Our first reading, from the Book of Wisdom tells us something very important about God’s power. God is not powerful in the way bullies are powerful. God does not need to crush people to prove that he is strong. Wisdom says that God cares for all people. God’s strength is the source of justice. God judges with mildness. God governs with patience. God gives sinners the chance to repent.

That can be hard for us to accept. When we see evil, we want it removed at once. When we see corruption, cruelty, lies, and selfishness, we want God to act quickly. Many of us in Zimbabwe know what it means to wait. We wait for electricity. We wait in queues. We wait for work. We wait for fair chances for young people. We wait for healing in families. We wait for leaders who truly serve. Waiting can make us tired. It can also make us angry.

But Wisdom teaches us that God’s patience is not weakness. God is not ignoring suffering. God is not saying that evil does not matter. God is saying that justice must leave room for mercy, because people can still change. A sinner can still repent. A person can still become better than the worst thing he or she has done.

Psalm 86 teaches us how to pray while we wait. The psalm says, “O Lord, you are good and forgiving.” It also cries, “Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my voice.” Later, the psalm describes God as merciful and

gracious, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness. This is the God we call upon. Not a God who enjoys punishment. Not a God who waits for us to fail. A God who listens. A God who forgives. A God who is near when the heart has run out of words.

If we pray to a God like that, then we must also try to live like that. If God is slow to anger, we cannot be quick to condemn. If God is forgiving, we cannot turn every wound into a weapon. This does not mean pretending harm did not happen. It does not mean staying silent in the face of abuse. It means seeking healing without revenge, truth without cruelty, justice without hatred.

In the Gospel Jesus gives us the image of a field. A farmer plants good wheat. But during the night, an enemy comes and plants weeds among the wheat. When the servants notice the weeds, they want to pull them up immediately. They want a clean field. They want quick action. They want to fix the problem now.

The master says no. He tells them that if they pull up the weeds too soon, they may pull up the wheat as well. In the time of Jesus, one kind of weed looked very much like wheat when it was young. The roots could also become tangled together. So a rough hand could destroy the good crop while trying to remove the bad.

Jesus is not telling us to ignore evil. He is not telling us to keep quiet when people are harmed. A Christian must protect the weak. A Christian must speak the truth. A Christian must refuse corruption, abuse, violence, and lies. Mercy does not mean calling wrong right.

But Jesus is warning us about something dangerous in the human heart. We can become too quick to judge people. We can think we know everything about them. We can reduce a person to one mistake, one sin, one rumour, one failure. We can forget that only God sees the whole story.

There is a big difference between saying, “This action is wrong,” and saying, “This person is worthless.” We must name evil clearly. God will judge fully at the harvest. Evil will not have the final word. But until that day, we are not the final judges of another person’s soul. We must leave open the door that God keeps open for repentance.

This Gospel is also a mirror. Each of us has wheat and weeds inside us. We have kindness, but also selfishness. We have courage, but also fear. We pray, but we also get proud. We want to serve, but we also want comfort. We are mixed people. God knows this, and God is patient with us.

St Ignatius of Loyola teaches us to look at our lives honestly, but not with hatred. In the examen, we do not stand before God as criminals trying to hide. We stand before Christ as loved sinners who want to grow. We ask: Where did I choose life today? Where did I turn away from love? Where is God asking me to change?

Jesus gives two more images. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It starts very small, but it grows. It becomes a place where birds can rest. This is a great comfort. Goodness often begins small. A kind word. A brave choice. A young person refusing to cheat. A worker refusing a bribe. A family choosing forgiveness. A community caring for someone who has been forgotten. These things may look small, but God make them grow and multiply. Our good acts can become good habits.

Then Jesus says that the Kingdom is like yeast mixed into flour. A little yeast seems insignificant, and soon it cannot even be seen. Yet quietly and patiently, it transforms the whole batch. God often works in the same way—not through noise or spectacle, but from within, through small acts of goodness and hidden faithfulness.

St Paul tells us in our Second Reading that when we do not know how to pray as we ought, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. That is good news. Sometimes we are too tired to find the right words. Sometimes all we can say is, “Lord, help me.” Even then, the Spirit is praying within us.

So we do not wait alone. We wait with the Spirit. We work with the Spirit. We hope with the Spirit.

Dear friends, the weeds in the world are real, but they are not the whole field. Evil is real, but it is not the whole story. The seed is small, but it is not the end of what God can grow. So keep being faithful. Keep being merciful. Keep doing the small good that is yours to do. God can begin with very little, and God often begins with us.

- In this week's examen, where am I tempted to judge a person instead of facing the wrong with truth and mercy?
- Where do I need to let Jesus look patiently at the wheat and weeds in my own heart?
- What small act of mercy, truth, or courage can I choose this week, trusting that God can make it grow?

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.