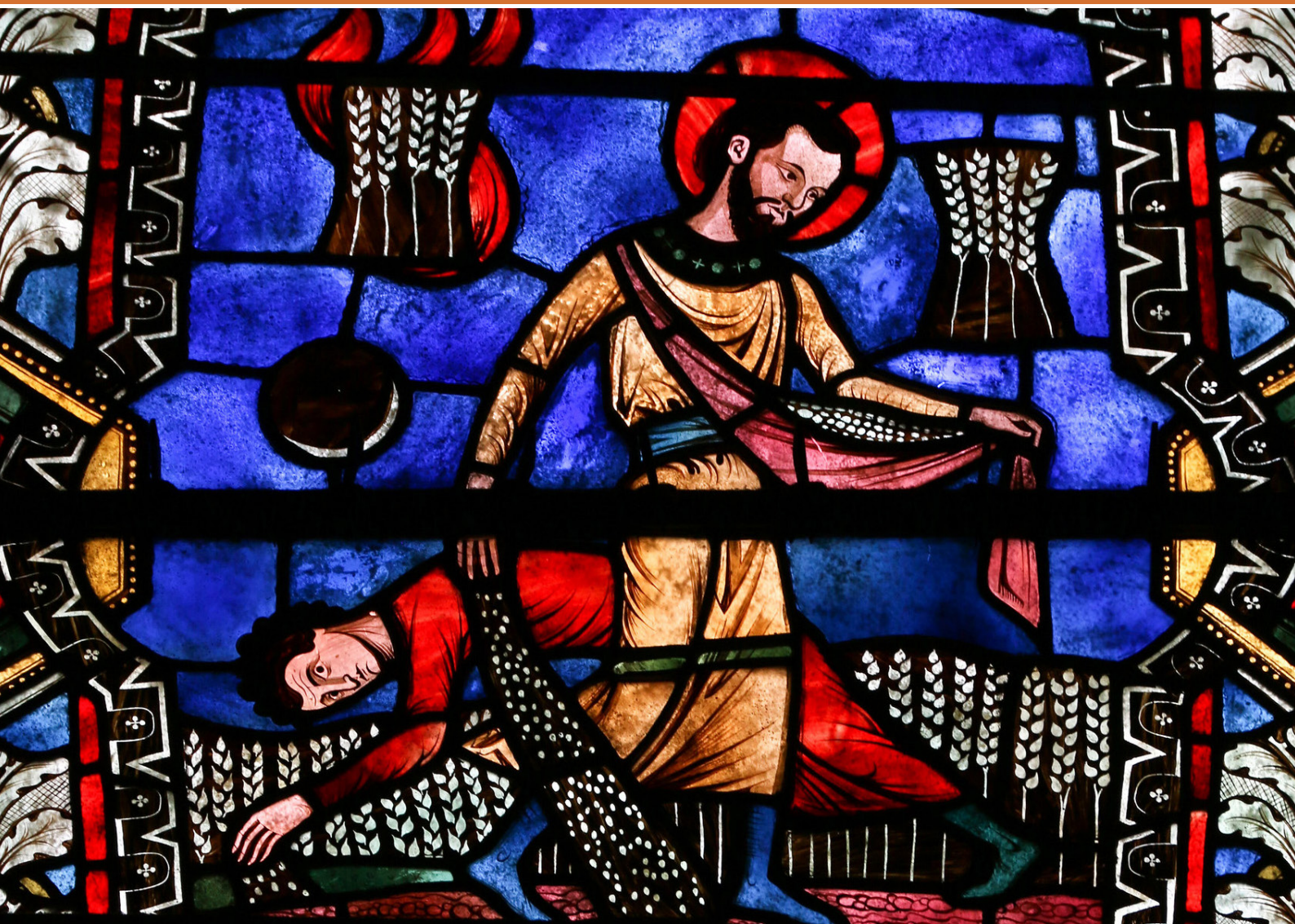




CELEBRATING AT HOME

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The patient gardener (Matthew 13:24-30)



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Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord is here, present among us.

**We are gathered with the whole Church
in this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

We have been called by God
to be the Church,
the Body of Christ in this world.

Lord Jesus,
you choose us to be your own.

Lord Jesus,
you heal us with forgiveness.

Lord Jesus,
you nourish us with the word of life.

Scripture Reading (*Matthew 13:24-30*)

Jesus put a parable before the crowds, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed darnel all among the wheat, and made off. When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed that you sowed in your field? If so, where does the darnel come from?' 'Some enemy has done this,' he answered. And the servants said, 'Do you want us to go and weed it out?' But he said, 'No, because when you weed out the darnel you might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Reflection - *The patient gardener*

The section of St Matthew's Gospel from which we are now reading concerns the Kingdom of God. Jesus uses this expression frequently in his teaching. The Kingdom is not heaven, it is the life and heart of God.

We live in the Kingdom when we live according to the mind and heart of God. The Kingdom, or reign of God, breaks into human reality when human beings live, breathe and act out of the life of God; when the heart of God becomes ours; when we allow God to speak and act in and through us.

Jesus frequently uses parables in his teaching - stories drawn from real life, designed to get his listeners to think, ask questions and make decisions.

Today's parable is a story about wheat and darnel growing together in a field. Apparently darnel, a weed, looks so similar to wheat that it is almost impossible to tell the two apart until the ears appear at harvest time. Only then can you really tell the difference between the two plants. Before that, there may be some signs to do with the direction in which the spikelets grow. Perhaps that is what the servants see and report it to the owner.

They ask if the owner wants them to remove the darnel. The owner says to leave both plants to grow together until harvest when the difference in the plants will be obvious. That will be the time to do the weeding.

So, what does it all mean?

No doubt, there were people in Matthew's community who thought that the Reign of God would come swiftly and with vehemence and immediately crush what was contrary to it. Others had grown anxious about the fact that the coming of the Kingdom seemed much delayed and wanted to get on with the job of weeding out the 'evil ones' according to their own judgement.

The parable, however, urges patience and to leave final judgement to God. What appears to be darnel may yet turn out to be wheat. Only time will tell.

The parable is also a reflection on the mixture of good and evil in the world. But it calls us to reflect, too, on the mix of good and evil we find in our own hearts. What will we turn out to be?

The parable also raises the question: can darnel turn into wheat given God's patience and mercy?

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Prayers of Intercession

God of patience,
**help us when we struggle with the good
and the evil tendencies of our own human heart.**

May the seed of your word
find rich soil within us.

Your kingdom is sown within each of us.
**Nourish us with your Spirit,
that we may grow and be made whole.**

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus,
we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for as a hidden seed grows into strength,
and silent leaven raises the loaf,
you are surely at work in our lives
and in the world.

May your kingdom continue to come
to life in us and in our world,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
carry us gently through the week ahead.
Amen.



Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family.



The Carmelites
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