

First reading**Wisdom 12:13,16-19**

There is no god, other than you, who cares for everything,
to whom you might have to prove that you never judged unjustly.
Your justice has its source in strength,
your sovereignty over all makes you lenient to all.
You show your strength when your sovereign power is questioned
and you expose the insolence of those who know it;
but, disposing of such strength, you are mild in judgement,
you govern us with great lenience,
for you have only to will, and your power is there.
By acting thus you have taught a lesson to your people
how the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men,
and you have given your sons the good hope
that after sin you will grant repentance.

Responsorial Psalm**Psalm 85(86):5-6,9-10,15-16**

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of love to all who call.
Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my voice.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

All the nations shall come to adore you
and glorify your name, O Lord:
for you are great and do marvellous deeds,
you who alone are God.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

But you, God of mercy and compassion,
slow to anger, O Lord,
abounding in love and truth,
turn and take pity on me.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Second reading**Romans 8:26-27**

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

Gospel Acclamation

cf.Ep1:17,18

Alleluia, alleluia!
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind,
so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.
Alleluia!

Gospel

Matthew 13:24-43

Jesus put another 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 burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn."'

He put another parable before them: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and shelter in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through.'

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed, he would never speak to them except in parables. This was to fulfil the prophecy:

I will speak to you in parables
and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world.

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house; and his disciples came to him and said, 'Explain the parable about the darnel in the field to us.' He said in reply, 'The sower of the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the darnel, the subjects of the evil one; the enemy who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels. Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time. The Son of Man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that provoke offences and all who do evil, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!'

Homily

19th July 2020 – 16th Sunday Ordinary Time, Year A

‘Take care, don’t wash your iPad!’

Dear friends, our schools have finished this week for a well-earned summer break and particularly for our staff some much needed rest and relaxation. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who have worked so hard in our schools over these last weeks and months. Over the first weeks of lockdown we paid tribute to all the NHS workers, social care and keyworkers with the Thursday night clapping in our roads and local communities. Our schools have been open all through lockdown, obviously not with all the pupils in, looking after some of our more vulnerable children and the children of our keyworkers and providing on-line resources for pupils at home. Thank you to them for all their efforts during a most unique, unusual and challenging time, enjoy the break and we look forward to coming back in September and starting a new academic year together and getting back to a new school ‘normal’.

I did something last weekend that I have never done before and I sincerely hope that I will never do again, I washed my iPad! I got up early on Saturday morning and because the weather forecast looked ok, I decided to do all my washing, including bedding and towels. I filled the washing basket and carried it down to the washing machine and put the first load in (bedding) and carried on doing a number of other jobs. At the end of the cycle I started taking the washing out of the machine only to discover something hard and metallic in the middle, to discover it was a very sorry looking and newly curved iPad. **“Oh dear”** I said to myself! It was only then that I remembered that I had placed the ‘pre-washed’ iPad on the top of the washing basket as I travelled downstairs first thing and it had obviously slipped down among the sheets.

Sadly I was unable to turn on/charge the very ‘dead’ iPad so I have ordered a new one this week, which has now been received and set-up. The moral of the sorry episode is take care of your phones/tablets and other devices and try not do too many things all at once, I am obviously not good at multi-tasking!

Last weekend we reflected on the parable of the sower and how we are called to listen attentively to the word of God who speaks directly to us, particularly in the scriptures. Turning to the Gospel this weekend we have three more parables to reflect on, today’s parables are used to help us understand what ‘the Kingdom of Heaven’ is like.

Homily

19th July 2020 – 16th Sunday Ordinary Time, Year A

The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to good seed being sown in the field, the potential in the tiny mustard seed and the yeast in the dough. The gift of God's life grows in us, drawing us to faith, hope and love. We are called to be Kingdom builders here on earth and urged to be hopeful and joyful in our lives (even when we do daft things like wash iPads!) and to be kind and merciful to others.

One interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the darnel is that it is about inclusivity. Darnel is a weed that closely resembles wheat and the difference only becomes evident when the plants grow and mature and the ears appear. When the owner's servants discovered weeds in the wheat field, the question is not only where have they come from, but also what should be done about them. I'm sure to their surprise the owner tells them not to weed the field but to let the wheat and the darnel grow together. At harvest time the sorting will be done, the wheat will be gathered up and stored and the darnel will be burned. In this parable I think we see the inclusive nature of Jesus' vision; we too are called to be inclusive people who welcome and accept all irrespective of any differences.

Jesus explains that the power of the Kingdom of God is like the growth potential of the tiny mustard seed or the transforming qualities of yeast. Tiny mustard seeds and yeast spores have a dynamic potential for change that is out of all proportion to their size and this is what the Kingdom of God is like. With the metaphors that he uses of the mustard seed and the yeast, Jesus asks us to trust in the power of the Holy Spirit and to trust in ourselves and our abilities to be agents of growth and change in our world today. We are called to be Kingdom builders who are all inclusive and who welcome and accept all; the Kingdom of God continues to grow and develop in you and me.

May God continue to be with you and bless you and your loved ones,
have a good week, **Fr Phil x.**

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion

19th July 2020 – 16th Sunday Ordinary Time, Year A

Let's pray that we may be builders of God's Kingdom here on earth:

For the Church; may she reach out to all people particularly those who are vulnerable, struggling or in any kind of need, that they may find comfort, consolation and peace. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For our young people and all in our school communities; may these holiday weeks be a time of rest and relaxation for all.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For ourselves; may we be able to see and develop the good that is within ourselves and in others. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick, especially those affected by the coronavirus; may they know the grace and healing of Jesus, the Lord of love and life.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life; may many people hearing the Lord's invitation respond generously to the call of the Good Shepherd. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who suffer racism and any form of discrimination: may we actively promote racial justice and uphold the dignity of every human person made in the image and likeness of God.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For our human family; may we learn to value God's Creation and learn to protect Our Common Home. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all the faithful departed especially **John McSorley** who has died recently: **"Eternal rest grant upon them..."**

We ask Our Lady and all the Saints to join their prayers with ours as we say: **"Hail Mary..."**

God our loving Father,
we offer these and all our prayers to you
through your Son who is Christ our Lord. R/ Amen

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion
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Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things and
I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.
Amen.