

Š Reflection on the Gospel >

This gospel reading brings good news and great joy for gardeners: no more weeding! Surely the weed will be happy to hear this! But is it reasonable? Not by ordinary standards of farming and gardening. Today Jesus tells us a story to remind us that God's ways are so very different from our own.

The contemporaries of Jesus found it difficult to understand how we could befriend sinners and eat with them (see Lk. 15:2 and Matt 9:11). Jesus was a morally upright person, but he often chastised people who prided themselves on their careful observance of God's law, while tolerating those who cared little for it.

Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds in today's gospel was his attempt to explain this apparent contradiction. The suggestion of the farmer's worker that they should pull up the weeds was entirely reasonable. It wasn't pleasant work, but somebody had to do it. Yet the farmer rejects the suggestion, for he knows there will be a later time for separating the weeds from the wheat at the harvest.

"This is how I am acting," Jesus is saying. "That is how God acts, like this patient farmer." Jesus knew, far better than his critics, that many in the crowds who heard him really didn't accept his message and the change of heart it requires. But Jesus refused to send such people away, for he knew that the time for separation and judgment would come later, in God's good time.

Jesus speaks these words and gives this example to all who are scandalized, because the church has so many hypocrites: for example, people who attend Mass on Sunday but whose lives don't square with the words they hear and speak in church. It is undeniable that the church is full of hypocrites: big and small, ordained and non-ordained, young and old and in between.

Jesus never guaranteed that every baptized Catholic would be an A+ member in God's kingdom. On the contrary, Jesus knew that the community of believers, the church, would include some for whom the grade of F would be too high. But he also knew that in God's kingdom and in the church, there is "plenty good room" for them all.

This is why Jesus forbids us to separate the "true believers" from the hypocrites. He knows that the task is really beyond us. "Pull up the weeds and you might take the wheat along with them," he warns. The weeds resemble the wheat too closely and their roots are too tightly intertwined. We are all human, with human weakness and failings.

Every attempt to create a "pure" church has ended in failure. Only God can purify the church because only God can read people's hearts. Only God can know the quality of our faith, both in life and death. If God has chosen to postpone the work of final judgment and purification, it is for the reason given in today's first reading: God's "mastery over all things" makes God "lenient to all," even to those we might think don't deserve it.

Jesus' story of the weeds and the wheat tells us of God's mercy and patience. It warns us not to be less merciful and patient than God as we survey other members of the church. Which of us would not like to be part of a church in which there are no hypocrites, and in which all members always practiced what they preached?

Creating a completely pure church is God's work, not ours, and the time for God's final purification is not yet. That should be encouragement for us, knowing that God's church and ours has "plenty good room" for everyone. Jesus' death and resurrection has opened the father's house to everyone, including the superficial, the lukewarm, the indifferent and the imperfect. After all, if Christ's church were really as pure as we might like it to be, can we be certain there would be any place for *us* in it?



Stewardship Report:



Revenue

July 13:	8,172.43
Faith Direct:	1,286.25
Total Offertory:	9,458.68
Last Year:	10,082.98
Poor Box:	155.34
Every Penny Counts Box:	72.56

Number of Adult Envelopes: 227
Number of Children's Envelopes: 7
Number of Faith Direct donors: 34
Number of Registered Households: 625

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Second Collection: Our second collection NEXT WEEK will be for the Church in Latin America.

Summer Stewardship: Please remember that your parish counts on your weekly sacrifice of treasure, joyfully given to the Lord in gratitude, and that treasure is needed even when you're away from us on vacation. Please remember to mail your offertory envelope to the rectory before you go away on a well-deserved holiday or drop it in the collection basket the week before you leave. Thank you for being a faithful steward!

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Weekly Offertory Envelopes: If you have still not received your weekly offertory envelopes for the months of July/August/September, please inform Tara in the rectory. Also, be sure to keep all of your mailing address information up to date so that you receive parish mailings in a timely manner. Thank you for your cooperation!

Votive Lights

The votive lights burning from
Sunday, July 20th through Saturday, July 26th :



Shrine of the Sacred Heart

For the Special Intentions of:
Paula Kelly

For the Happy Repose of:
Paul & Mary Gallo

Shrine of the Madonna & Child:

For the Special Intentions Of:
Pat Makowski on her birthday
Frani Peifer
The Dalmas Family

For the Happy Repose of:
John Peifer

Other Items of Note:

NEW PARISHIONERS: If you are new to St. Matthias Parish, we welcome you with open arms! Having a home parish to be involved in and support through weekly attendance at Mass and giving of time, talent and treasure is important! We hope you will find many ways to become involved with our parish family. Please take a moment to fill out a *parish census registration*. They are located in the back of the church or can be obtained at the rectory. Completed forms can be mailed in, dropped off at the rectory or placed in the collection basket. All parishioners must be REGISTERED and PRACTICING members of our parish for a minimum of SIX MONTHS before they can be issued a Letter of Good Standing for sacramental sponsorships. Parents of children needing to be baptized must follow this six month registration commitment as well. Parents of our school children must be registered in order to be considered for the in-parish discounted tuition rate as well. If you have any questions or need assistance with your forms, please contact the parish Secretary, Tara Guevara, in the rectory at 301-459-4814 ext 201.

Youth For Christ Camp: Youth For Christ is hosting a live-in, three day retreat camp program for youth ages 12 to 18 in Baltimore at the Holy Korean Martyrs on August 8, 9 and 10th. The Youth Camp provides a venue for the genuine conversion of teenagers, through a personal encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. It is the place where young people can form friendships with one another as they share ideas and experiences, entertain one another and play games in a wholesome environment where Christian values are discussed and actively practiced. Cost of the camp is \$55 per participant. For further information and details, please contact Adz or Reggie Estorninos at 301-567-7754. Informational forms can also be obtained in the rectory by contacting Tara.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: All parish organizations should be aware that Friendship Hall will be unavailable for use during the entire month of August so that maintenance crews can clean, strip and wax the floors. NO ACTIVITIES will be scheduled during August for the space and any previously scheduled activities are CANCELLED. We regret any inconvenience. Please contact Tara in the rectory if you have any questions.

Run for Vocations: You are invited to join the “Run for Vocations” team at the Marine Corps Marathon, 1/2 Marathon & 10K on Sunday, October 26. All levels of runners and walkers are most welcome. This is a unique experience to get into the best shape of your life, accomplish an amazing goal, meet new people, support our seminarians and work of priest vocations. For more information and to register, contact Carol Flannery or Mike Greaney at flanneryc@adw.org or call 301-853-4584.

One Priest In Residence: Please be aware that since Father Bob has moved to St. Bernadette’s, Father Jeff is our only priest in residence. If you need to speak with him, please make an appointment through Tara in the rectory and be considerate of his time. He has many tasks as Pastor to our Flock.



Mass Intentions for the Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Monday, July 21: Lawrence of Brindisi, priest, doctor

8:30 am Cynthia Amanyeiwe (living)

Tuesday, July 22: Mary Magdalene

8:30 am Pat Makowski (living– birthday)

Wednesday, July 23: Bridget of Sweden, religious

8:30 am Adah Strobell

Thursday, July 24: Sharbel Makhluf, priest

8:30 am Pearl Aitcheson

Friday, July 25: James, Apostle

8:30 am Fr. Augustine Kizito Abizi

Saturday, July 26: Vigil– Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

3:30 pm to 4:30pm—Confessions

5:00 pm Corazon Biljera

Sunday, July 27: Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00 am Anne Brace

9:30 am Teofila Salamon

11:30am Ann D’Andrea

Please Pray for: †The Sick and Homebound In Our Parish:

Virgie Azarcon; Barbara Brink; Linda Bryans; Fidel dela Cuesta; Lisa Cuthbert; Eleanor DeMarco; Lisa Farland; Karen Fisher; Jose Guevara; Joseph Harrison; Robert Hoke; Anne Mbimi Ifouini; Charles Jones; Paula Kelly; Robyn Kirby; Nancy Maimone; Albertine Mandzo; Bob Martin; Willie (Bill) Moore; Bernadette Murphy; Larry Murphy; Rosemarie Nardozi; David Obi; Peter O’Neill; Thomas Opalski; Joseph Otero; Evelyn Pierce; John Rampone; Jose Ocasio Rodriguez; Joe Sico; Marian C. Wahle; Judy Widdis; Jean Zanin; Ryan Zawada

†For Our Military Serving in

Afghanistan or Iraq: Spc. Michael J. Chiddo; Ryan A. Morgan

†For Our Deceased: Louise Ellis; Michael Nardozi

†Names will be placed on our prayer list for three weeks. To add a name or to request continuing prayers, call Tara Guevara at 301-459-4814 or email tguevara@stmatthias.org.

Youth News

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To the entire Saint Matthias parish, the pastor, and the adults of the youth group;

I am especially thankful for the impact that you all have made on my spiritual development. The June 29th graduation Mass was a success and I thank you all for having the Mass in honor and celebration of us.

The gift baskets were lovely, and I must add that as I began to unpack mine, I immediately felt the love, the generosity and the thoughtfulness of everyone! I feel extremely proud to call St. Matthias my home parish, and I know that whichever parish I encounter in Ohio within the coming years will never be able to replace the one I call “home.”

With Love,

Stephanie E. Onuoha



St. Matthias School Raffle 2008

For the July 14th Drawing:
Winner & Seller ~ Guy Ramsey
Upper Marlboro, MD