

Father O'Connor's Homily for 19 July 2026  
16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time-A

Wisdom 12: 13, 16-19  
Romans 8: 26-27  
Matthew 13: 24-43 or 13: 24-30

There was a woman who was known by everyone in the parish as a constant complainer. Whatever was going on, she didn't like it. The church was too hot, the church was too cold. She would write notes to the organist: the hymns were too new, the hymns were too old.

She would complain to the pastor whenever he would preach a theological homily, that he was preaching "the old stuff." Whenever he would preach about taking care of human needs, she would say that he was becoming "a modernist." She didn't last very long in any parish ministry or organization because she would claim that those in charge didn't know what they were doing. There was just no satisfying this very unhappy person.

Today's Gospel is a story of the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus tells about a field with good seed [wheat] and bad seed [weeds]. In the life of the Church family, we find both growing together until Judgment Day. That is the human side of the Church.

Now, we all have people on our list that we find to be "difficult," don't we? But if the truth be told, you and I are probably on the "difficult" list of at least one other person, yes?

You would think that in the Church family there would "never be heard a discouraging word, and the skies are not cloudy all day." [Sorry. I just couldn't resist that!] But there is wheat, and there are also weeds. Why? Because weeds in the Church are evidence of weeds in its members' lives.

The same woman who was constantly complaining had another encounter with her pastor, and for some reason this time she had mellowed a bit. She told him about how she had been hurt very deeply many years ago. But she had never tended to this hurt, and it was still causing her pain. After that conversation he realized what was going on: that hurting people very often hurt other people.

That is true. Hurting people often hurt other people. Many times they don't realize what they are doing. But it can become a lifestyle for them – a habit – and they leave other people wounded in their wake.

Those weeds in our lives – we need to eliminate them now, or they are going to manage us. And they will probably affect not only us, but also those around us.

What can we do about these weeds in our lives? I am suggesting two things today: one is to be watchful and admit to them, and the other is to turn them over to God through prayer and Sacraments, and maybe even with the help of others.

The trouble is that we might not really want to let go of some of those weeds: our anger, our resentment, our lust, our dependencies, our addictions. But we need to acknowledge them and turn them over to God, or they will begin managing us to our peril.

There was an advertisement for a company that could take photos that people had, and if there had been a falling-out with someone in those photos, they could digitally remove that person, and even substitute somebody else in their place!

Isn't that something? What if we could do that with our sins – remove them digitally? Well, it doesn't work that way. As always, God has a better idea. God wants to forgive us and heal us and help us to amend our lives. God wants to help us root out our weeds so that we can be a part of His bountiful harvest.

A writer named Robert pictured his heart as a home that he was leading Jesus through. And Jesus was working some splendid transformations as He walked through each room.

Then they got to a locked closet. Jesus wanted to open the door, but Robert would not let Him. Robert felt he had given the Lord access to everything else in his house, and so he was entitled to this little closet for himself.

But Jesus prevailed upon him. Robert unlocked the door, and Jesus cleaned out that closet. The home was now fresh. Then Robert realized there was something else that he needed to do. He gave Jesus the key to the home of his heart.

Robert found that his relationship with Jesus was changed for the better. Robert was no longer the host. He was now the servant. Jesus was no longer the guest. He was now the owner. That is the secret, really, to breaking the cycle of sin and failure: turning our lives over to the Lord and giving Him ownership of the home of our hearts.

Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as a field, with the wheat that He has sown, and with the weeds that the devil has sown, growing together until Judgment Day.

It is vital that we turn our lives over to the Lord now and allow the Divine Gardener to weed out what does not belong there, so that you and I can be a part of God's bountiful harvest of heaven, that Jesus promises has room for us, and will happily endure forever.