

JULY 23, 2017



# SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



WISDOM 12:13, 16-19

PSALM 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

ROMANS 8:26-27

MATTHEW 13:24-43  
OR 13:24-30

## REFLECTION

As an experienced gardener I know how to tell a good plant from a bad plant, even when they are only one inch high. Careful weeding makes for much less work later on. Weeds “go to seed” and make more weeds. They choke out good crops. To allow them to grow up alongside the prized vegetables contradicts everything we know about gardening! But hold on here: in today’s Gospel, Jesus tells us to leave the weeds alone and to let God figure it out at harvest time. There is much wisdom in this analogy because we often think we know better, especially when it comes to determining who is and isn’t living up to our standards. We think we know what’s right, that we know who the real sinners are. In fact, we don’t know better. Only God is the Master Gardener. The rest of us are like my three-year-old daughter, who isn’t wise enough to tell the difference between weeds and wheat. I’ve made the mistake of letting her “help” me pull weeds, and it didn’t end well—she dug up everything in sight! Our job is to be the mustard seed or the yeast—to bring Christ to everyone, even those whom we are pretty sure are “weeds.” Our job is to treat everyone, even those who appear to be “weeds,” with love and respect. Only God can separate the good from the bad. And the truth is we are all a mixture of weeds and wheat, good and bad, sinner and saint. So the next time you are tempted to “pluck a weed from God’s garden,” think again.



See the famous reflection, attributed to St. Oscar Romero (but actually written by Bishop Ken Untener) in which we “plant the seeds that will one day grow” and that only God is the Master builder. [http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/archbishop\\_romero\\_prayer.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/archbishop_romero_prayer.cfm)

## ACTION

Find the Serenity Prayer online. Pray it. Ask God to help you with all that burdens you.

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- Oftentimes when we are most critical of others it’s because we are unhappy with what’s going on inside ourselves. What part of yourself do you wish you could find easier to accept?
- Can you think of a time when you may have been too critical of a friend or a family member? What did you, or could you do, to make the situation right again?