

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Wheat and Weeds Can Change**      Sixteenth Week in Ordinary Time      Saturday,  
July 26, 2014 8:15 AM Jer 7:1-11; **Mt 13:24-30** Sts. Joachim and Anne, parents of  
the BVM (Jesus wants his followers to be hopeful, patient, alert.)

**Jesus used the parables and sometimes farfetched images to get his point across.**

Here the farfetched image, which is actually natural to a parable, is someone sowing weeds.

**Everyone knows weeds aren't sown.** Weeds are wild. If they are sown at all, they are sown by the wind.

What is wheat? **Wheat is actually a very specific form of grass, but it isn't wild.** Wheat is not wild because the seeds don't fly in the wind. It's like wild grass, except that **the seeds cluster and have to be broken apart and planted.**

Now the fields of Jesus' day were mixes of wheat and weeds. The weeds actually were there historically longer. Wheat arose at some particular point in the genetic history of grass. But the point is that no one, no farmer, ever kept a field for the sake of the field. No one just wants fields of wheat. **The wheat is for something, and that's his point.** The world is for something else. The world is like a field, but nobody has a field for itself. **The field is for the harvest.** And Jesus is always finding different ways of trying to get that point across. This is a field, yes, and it happens to be a field that's full of good and bad realities. **There is coexistence of good and evil in this world.** But the world isn't created for itself, nor maintained for itself. It has another purpose. The purpose is the harvest. And that's coming. **The purpose of the world will be revealed at the harvest. Meanwhile, we all have to coexist: good and bad all thrown together.**

Not only that, but **each of us** individually is a coexistence of a sort of **good and bad qualities: character defects mixed with virtues.** We are not here just to be here. We are here for a purpose. How will this work out? That's a mystery, a question, an unknown; but it

will work out. **Everything is in process**, just as we can see there is a process in the world of vegetation: plantings and harvestings. In a similar way, so with the world, so with all of creation. It's just that the planting and the growing is a very long and drawn out process. **We don't see the whole thing in our own lifetime.** The scale of time for the world field is far beyond everything we can imagine. It's enormous. But it's happening nonetheless. We might not realize this because of the timescale, but it's happening. **It's progressing ever onward toward this harvest.**

Meanwhile, as St. Augustine pointed out, we are not like plants in that **we can change.** Weeds can become wheat. And, as he would point out, wheat can become weeds. This is the great issue of conversion that dominated Augustine's thought for so much of the time. So this long drawn out process is an **opportunity for conversion**, for the wheat to become weeds, which would be terrible, or the weeds to become wheat, which is the point of redemption, salvation, **bringing about something miraculous, the power of God to change.**

And we all have a role to play in this. The first role is one of hope. **Jesus wants his followers to be hopeful**, to see the good in everything, to see even in those who are wicked the possibility that they can become good. They can, and Jesus insisted on that. He came for the sick, not for the well. **He believed in the potential of people to change and to become good**, holy, wholesome, righteous, just people, holy people. Secondly, **we have to be patient** because this process boggles our little minds. It's just such an enormous thing, and its timespan is so long it boggles our little minds. So we have to be patient. Thirdly, **we have to be alert to the changes that we need to make to bear more fruit.**