

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

(Mt 13:31-5) (*Audio Year A Track 024*)

(*Poem* Vol. 2, pp. 212-5, 228-9, Vol. 3, pp. 275, 305; *Gospel* Vol. 3, pp. 181-4, 200-1, Vol. 5, pp. 204, 241; *Autobiography*, pp. 59-60)

(Jesus explains the parable of the Wheat and the Darnel)

[...] The crowds slowly disperse. The apostles, Elias, and his family stay in the kitchen garden. Then Jesus says: "Gather round Me and listen. I will explain the full meaning of the parable to you, as it has two more meanings, besides what I told the crowd.

In the universal sense, the purpose of the parable is as follows: The **field** is the world. The **good seed** is the children of the Kingdom of God - sown by God in the world - while they wait to reach their end, and be cut by the Mower, and be taken to the Master of the world, Who will store them in His granaries. The subjects of the Evil one are the **darnel**, which has also been spread in the field of God for the purpose of causing grief to the Master of the world, and damage to the corn of God. The enemy of God has sown them deliberately - through witchcraft - because the demon really perverts the nature of man - making him a creature of his own - and then sows it, so as to lead astray other people, whom he has not been able to enslave otherwise. The **harvest** - that is the tying of the sheaves and carrying them to the granaries - is the end of the world, and that is accomplished by the angels. They are given instructions to gather together the creatures which have been cut, to separate the corn from the darnel, and - as in the parable - the darnel is burnt. So the damned will be burnt in the eternal fire, at the Last Judgement... The just - instead - the chosen seed, will be taken to the eternal Jerusalem, where they will shine like the sun, in the Kingdom of My Father and yours.

That is the universal sense. But there is another sense, which is the answer to the question which you have been asking yourselves many times, and particularly since yesterday evening. Your question is: "Can there be traitors in the mass of disciples?" and your hearts tremble with horror and fear. Yes, there may be some. There are certainly some.

...The master... chose his disciples. How were they, therefore, led astray?... The master tires himself, cultivating them, so that they may yield one hundred per cent. He takes care of everything - with patience, love, wisdom, working hard, and persevering. He also sees their wicked inclinations, their barrenness and greed, their stubbornness and weakness. But he hopes all the time, corroborating his hope through prayer and penance, because he wishes to lead them to perfection.

But the fields are open. They are not gardens enclosed in walls of protection - of which the only owner is the master, who is the only one who can go in. They are open. Placed as they are in the centre of the world, among the world. Anyone can go near them, and into them. Everybody and everything. Oh! darnel is not the only bad

seed sown! Darnel could be the symbol of the bitter frivolity of the worldly spirit. But all the other seeds, scattered by the Enemy, come up in them. There are nettles, couch-grass, parasites, bear bines, and finally hemlock and poisonous herbs. Why? What are they?

Nettles: are stinging untameable spirits, which hurt through their excess of poison, and cause so much trouble.

Couch-grass: These are parasites, who wear out the master, as they can only creep and suck, taking advantage of his work, and injuring the willing ones, who would make much more profit if the master were not upset and distracted by the cares required by the couch-grass.

The sluggish **bear bines** rise from the ground, only by making use of the efforts of other people.

Parasites: they are a torture on the already painful road of the master, and a torment to the faithful disciples who follow him. They twist, pierce, tear to pieces, scratch, and cause mistrust and pain.

The **poisonous ones:** are the criminal disciples, who go as far as betraying and killing - as hemlock and other poisonous plants do. Have you noticed how beautiful they are, with their little flowers which later become white, red, blue-violet berries? Who would say that the white or pinkish star-shaped corolla - with its little golden heart - or the many-coloured corals - so much like other little fruits which are the delight of birds and children - can cause death, once they are ripe? No one. And the innocent ones fall into the trap. They believe that everybody is as good as they are... they pick, and die.

They believe that everybody is as good as they are! Oh! The truth that makes the master sublime, and condemns his traitor! How? Does goodness not disarm wickedness? Does it not make ill-will harmless? No. It does not, because the man who has fallen a prey to the Enemy, is indifferent to what is superior... As far as he is concerned, kindness becomes weakness - on which it is lawful to tread - and it stimulates his ill-will, as the scent of blood stimulates a beast to slaughter.

Also the master is always **innocent!**... and he lets his traitor poison him, because he cannot possibly believe that a human being can murder an innocent person.

The enemies come into the fields of the Master, that is, to His disciples. They are many, and Satan is the first one. The others are his servants - that is - men, passions, the world, and the flesh. The disciple who is more easily struck by them, is the one who is not entirely close to the Master, but is between the Master, and the world. He is not capable, and does not want to part completely with the world, the flesh, passions, and demons, to belong entirely to Him Who wants to take him to God. And the world, flesh, passions, and the demons scatter their seeds in him: (which are) gold, power, women, pride, the fear of an unfavourable opinion of the

world, the spirit of (so-called) “**usefulness**”. These men say: "The great ones are the strongest. I will serve them, so that they will be friendly to me". And they become criminals and damned, for such miserable things!...

Why does the Master - Who sees the imperfection of a disciple - not cast him away at once, even if He is not prepared to submit to the thought: "He will be My murderer"? That is what you are asking yourselves. Because it is useless to do so. If He did so, he would not avoid having him as an enemy, a double and more dangerous enemy, because of his sorrow and his anger at being found out, or at being driven away.

Yes, because of his **sorrow**. Because sometimes a bad disciple does not realise that he is such. The demon's action is so subtle, that he is not aware of it. He becomes wicked without even suspecting that he is subject to such action.

And because of his **anger**. He is enraged at being known for what he is, when he is aware of Satan's work, and of his followers. These men tempt weak people in their weak points, to remove from the world a saint who offends them - wicked as they are when compared with his goodness.

The saint prays, and trusts in God. "Let what You allow, be done" he says. He adds only the clause: "providing it serves Your purpose". The saint knows that the time will come when the wicked darnel will be rejected from the harvest. By whom? By God Himself, Who does not allow more than what is useful, to the triumph of His loving will.”

Matthew says: “If You maintain that Satan and his followers are always to be blamed... it seems to me that the responsibility of the disciple diminishes.”

Jesus replies: “Do not believe that. If there is Good, there is also Evil. And man is gifted with discernment, and freedom.”

The Iscariot then says: “You say that God does not allow more than what is useful, to the triumph of His loving will. Therefore, such error is also useful - if He allows it - and it serves the triumph of the divine will.”

With His concluding response, Jesus replies: “And you infer, as Matthew does, that that justifies the disciple's crime. God created the lion without ferocity, and the snake without poison. Now one is ferocious, and the other is poisonous. That is why God separated them from man. Ponder over that, and draw conclusions...”

(A little while later Jesus is at Magdala. Out of gratitude for a woman's hospitality - and at her request - Jesus relates a parable to her family. He says:)

“...Listen. Here on My knees I have a little boy who has spoken very wisely. He said: "Everything that is obtained by deceit, becomes straw". His mother taught him that truth.

It is not a tale. It is an eternal truth. What is done dishonestly, is never successful. Because falsehood in words, deeds, and in religion is always a sign of alliance with Satan, the master of falsehood. Do not believe that the deeds, worthy of achieving the Kingdom of Heaven, are very noisy or showy. They are common, continuous deeds, but performed with a supernatural purpose of love. Love is the seed of the plant that sprouts in you, and grows up as far as Heaven. And in its shade, all the other virtues sprout. I will compare it to the tiny mustard seed. How small it is! It is one of the smallest seeds that man sows. But look how big and leafy it becomes - when it has grown up - and how much fruit it bears. Not one hundred per cent, but one hundred to one. The smallest. But the most diligent in working. How much profit it gives you.

Love is the same. If you enclose - in your hearts - a tiny seed of love for your Most Holy God, and for your neighbour, and if you accomplish your deeds, guided by love, you will not fail in any of the precepts of the Decalogue. You will not lie to God by means of a false religion - of practices, but not of the spirit. You will not lie to your neighbour, behaving as ungrateful children, as adulterers, as husbands and wives who are too exacting, as thieves in business, as liars in life, as violent avengers towards your enemies. Look how many birds have taken shelter - in this warm hour of the day - among the branches of the trees in the garden. Before long, that mustard plant - which is still very small - will be a real perch for birds. All the birds will come to the safe shade of those thick and comfortable trees, and their little ones will learn to fly safely - among those branches: which are like steps and a net, which they can climb without falling.

Such is love, the foundation of the Kingdom of God...”

(And a little later, while evangelizing at the border of Phoenicia, Jesus says to the people:)

“... To make dough, the housewife takes a little of the dough of the previous week. Only a tiny bit of the whole mass! And she buries it in the dough, and protects it from harmful draughts in the favourable warmth of the house. Do likewise yourselves - you followers of Good - and you, too - who have gone away from the Father and from His Kingdom. Let the former give a tiny part of their yeast to support and reinforce the latter, who will add it to the particle of justice still existing in them. And both of you, protect the new yeast from the hostile draughts of Evil, in the warmth of Charity, according to what it is in you... Support with the warmth of your homes, with the faith of the same religion fermenting in your hearts... so that she may feel that

she is still loved, that she is still a daughter of Zion and a sister of yours, and that her good will may materialise, and the Kingdom of Heaven may come to all souls.”....

(Later still, a Hebrew woman - who is married to a Roman - says to Jesus:)

“... My Lord... I wanted to speak to You about one thing... You said that the followers of the true God must take a little of their holy yeast, and put it into the good flour, to make it rise with holiness. I have done that with my husband. I have tried - during the twenty years we have been together - to work his soul - which is good - with the yeast of Israel. But he cannot make up his mind... and he is old... I would like to have him with me in the next life... United by faith as we are now by love... I am not asking for riches, welfare, health. What we have is sufficient, praised be the Lord! But that is what I would like... Pray for my husband! That he may belong to the true God...”

Jesus answers: “He will. You may be sure of that. You are asking for something holy, and it will be granted to you. You have understood the duty of a wife - to God, and to her husband. I wish all wives did! I solemnly tell you, that many of them should imitate you. Continue like that, and you will have the joy of having your Titus beside You - in prayer, and in Heaven...”

In her Autobiography, written before the commencement of the visions and dictations which became her major works, Maria Valtorta says:)

...Born in a period of sadness and penance, destined to love the sorrowful Jesus, I quite properly had to be familiar with weeping - ever more weeping. May it be blessed as well, for it was the dew which quenched the thirst of the seedling of love, and made it “a great tree on whose branches the birds of the air come to take their rest”.

For me, the little mustard seed - the smallest of all seeds and symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven - is Love (with a capital “L”). For only Love can give us - who are so imperfect - the capacity to conquer the Kingdom of Heaven for ourselves.

But the love (with a small “l”) which God had deposited as a small seed in a little child’s soul, had descended, together with a divine teardrop. And it needed weeping and sorrow, to put forth roots and foliage, and to rise up towards the sky... Yet to reach the sky, I had to gather together the branches in the form of a cross, and nail myself to it, after having struggled under all the gusts of wind, trying to free myself from sorrow.

Then the tree - nourished by tears, warmed by love, and pruned by sorrow - became gigantic. And I hope that its foliage, eternally alive, will supply my angel with the palm and shoot: for my crown of victory, and for my ensignia of martyrdom.
