

16th Sunday
7/19/2020

ZAPPING EVIL

Sometimes perhaps you've wondered. *Why doesn't God just zap all the evil out of the world?* Well if God were to zap *all* the evil out of the world, none of us would be here. We all have some evil within us that we have to fight. Instead, like the man who sowed good seed, God doesn't want to uproot the good with the bad. God is patient.

Until the end of time the world will be a mixture of good and evil, of weeds and wheat. And the Church will also be a mixture of good and evil. His servants, while having good intentions, are quick to judge and ready to act. But like this man in the parable, God is willing to wait.

Pope Emeritus Benedict once noted, God is patient and we suffer because God is patient and yet at the same time, we stand in need of God's patience. Our suffering can make us more compassionate and prepare us for something else, for a greater work God may have in mind.

God is patient and if we are to be Godlike, that is to say, if we are to be holy, then we too are to be patient and be patient in more than just one setting. We are to be patient with others, with our neighbor. That patience starts with our family. In some cases nobody knows how to push our buttons, like those in our family. Sometimes, they can drive us crazy but without necessarily being aware of it, we can return the favor. We are to be patient with those in traffic, those with whom we disagree politically or religiously, *politically or religiously* and the list goes on to include literally everyone.

But we are also called to be patient with ourselves. That doesn't mean that we excuse ourselves or blame someone else. It means that we are finite creatures but we're in this for the long haul. We are finite creatures with a goal that's infinite. We are people not angels and we have to work at doing what is right. None of us will bat a thousand.

And we are also called to be patient with God and that can be hard too. But God's timing is different from ours and remains a mystery. What kind of God are you

left with if you understand everything? The story of salvation is God interrupting people's lives and asking them to trust in him, which also means to be patient with him. His ways and what seems to be an interruption, a bother or even a tragedy can in fact be part of the plan. God can draw good out of evil. The evil remains evil but God can draw good out from it. Exhibit A is Jesus on the cross. Out of the evil of state sponsored terrorism, God revealed his love and brought forth our salvation. We are called to be patient with others, with ourselves and with God, especially when we don't understand.

And yet our patient God is also a God of justice and this parable also speaks to us about judgement. That is not something we like to think about but it is real and a mystery we will face. Every time we pray to the creed we profess that he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. Jesus makes clear that there will be justice for those who do evil as well as justice for the righteous.

That judgement is something we are also called on to ponder and keep before our eyes. That judgement is made by God, not by us. St. John of the Cross said, In the evening of life, you will be examined in love. Loving God, remaining faithful to his instruction and loving our neighbor help prepare the way to heaven for us. We do this informed by the word of God, strengthened by one another, fortified by prayer and enriched by the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist. We do it striving to live lives of intentional faith in every little way.

Why doesn't God just zap all the evil out of the world? Because God is patient and he doesn't want to see us zapped but rather for us to share eternal life with him. We suffer because God is patient and yet we need his patience. With our lives may we also mirror God's patience by being patient with others, with ourselves and with God. Trusting in God's love, mercy and the many helps he gives us on a pilgrimage through this life, may we share with him life eternal.