

## Word Sharing Circle (WSC) Reflection Guide

16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle A, Year I)

July 23, 2017

### Community Word:

True disciples of Christ bear much fruit.

### Theme:

We bear much fruit when our works of faith prosper the Kingdom of God.

### Promise:

***“The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*** (Mt 13:43)

### Reflection:

For the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Matthew’s gospel gives us a metaphorical perspective of the reign of the Kingdom of God through three parables. In the parable of the weeds, Jesus reminds us that in this world, both good and evil exists and he gives us wisdom to understand why and what our attitude should be.

Everyday in our lives, we are faced with both good and evil. There is so much beauty and blessings that we see each day, but in the midst of these we also experience weeds of injustice, violence, and all kinds of evil wrongdoings. We begin to ask why a loving and compassionate God allow evil to exist. Although God permits evil, He can make good things out of worst situations. In Psalms 86, He is acknowledged as a God who is all good, forgiving, merciful, gracious, abounding in kindness. He allows us to freely choose to have a relationship with Him amidst tragedies and difficulties. He allows temptation to come our way because He knows that by them, our faith will be stronger and good will overcome evil as we choose to turn away from the easy and selfish path.

As St. Paul tells the Romans: ***“If sin abounds, grace abounds much more,”*** (Rom 5:20). We may grow impatient and want to pull out the “weeds” immediately and beg God’s vindication on evil people. But, God as the landowner of the harvest tells us: ***“Let them grow together until harvest,”*** (Mt 13:30a). By not uprooting the weeds, God is teaching us to approach the enemy with forgiveness, patience and forbearance. God loves goodness more than He hates evil. And He is a God who gives second chances to people who reform or transform their evil ways. He is our Creator and the Author of life.

In his reflection on the parable, St. Augustine said: *“But in the Lord’s field, which is the church, at times what was grain turns into weeds and at times what were weeds turn into grain; and no one knows what they will be tomorrow.”* As human beings, it is not all the time that we do what is right. Sometimes, we also do wrong to the point of inflicting harm to others and to ourselves. But in all circumstance, we must show the love of Christ even when there is disagreement among us. God does not just “uproot” or condemn us when we make mistakes. He forgives us and truly looks after us. The book of Wisdom says: ***“There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned,”*** (Wis 12:13). God changes hearts and lives. We just need to rely on His ways and allow all things to pass in accordance with His perfect will and time.

Our theme tells us - **We bear much fruit when our works of faith prosper the Kingdom of God.** Our response to the message of the gospel this week is to put our complete faith in God’s purpose. And to strengthen our faith in doing the Lord’s will, St. Paul reminds us: ***“The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought,”***

(Rom 8:26a). Our faith may be like a very small mustard seed or yeast, but as we allow the Holy Spirit to help us grow and prosper God's Kingdom through our works, we will be the rich harvest as God's children at the end of this age. Matthew's gospel describes this for us: ***"The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father,"*** (Matthew 12: 41 - 43).

Let us be strong in our faith and do good to promote the kingdom of heaven here on earth while there is still time. For as we do, in our Lord's goodness, we will reap our reward when the time comes.

**Prayer:**

O Most Gracious God, we thank You for giving us faith to do what is good and participate in promoting Your heavenly kingdom. Let your Holy Spirit empower us to see what is morally right and be instruments to fight what is evil. Lord, deepen our faith to keep us strong as we face the works of the evil one and to remain steadfast in our faith journey to the very end. Amen.

**Reflection Guides:**

1. When you encounter evil or bad people, what is your normal reaction? Is it your wish that God might punish them? Or, would you pray for their conversion instead?
2. How can you inspire people to be good, especially those who are unpleasant and difficult to deal with? Share how you can be that "good seed" or "yeast" to help them grow as better Christians.

**This Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

July 23, 2017 (Sun) - Wis 12:13, 16-19/Ps 86:5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16/Rom 8:26, 27/Mt 13:24-43

July 24, 2017(Mon) - Ex 12:13, 16-19/ps 86:5, 6, 9, 10, 145, 16/Rom 8:26-27/Mt 13:24-43

July 25, 2017(Tues) - 2Cor 4:7-15/Ps 126:1-6/Mt 20:20-28

July 26, 2017(Wed) - Ex 16:1-5,9-15/PS 78:18-19,23-28/Mt 13:1-9

July 27, 2017 (Thur) - Ex 19:1, 2, 9, 11, 16, 20/Dn 3:52-56/Mt 13:10-17

July 28, 2017 (Fri) - Ex 20:1-17/Ps 19:8-11/Mt 13:18-23

July 29, 2017(Sat) - Ex 24:3-8/Ps 50:1,2,5,6,14,15/Jn 11:19-27

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"