



Immaculate Conception
Church

Homily for the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A 2014

He is the Irish singer-songwriter, musician, businessman and philanthropist who is best recognized as the front man for the rock band U2. His name is Bono and he is also a man of faith...and he's unafraid to claim that faith.

Recently he was asked if Jesus Christ was divine. This was his answer:

"Either Jesus was the Son of God or He was nuts. I find it hard to accept that one-half of the earth for 2000 years has been touched and inspired by some nut case. I do believe that Jesus was divine...that He rose from the dead...and I have no problem with miracles."

Quite the testament from a talented musician who spent his life becoming a respected and acclaimed figure in rock music. The courage of his words should give us cause to reflect. And his witness also is a clue to me to look more deeply into the words of today's Gospel. For these are the words, the teaching, of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God who rose from the dead.

On the surface these words seem to be a lesson in gardening. You plant good seeds...someone else plants bad seeds. If you pull up the bad seeds you endanger destroying the good seeds. The solution... wait till it is time to harvest and then separate the bad from the good. But is that all there is to this? I don't think so. This Gospel is much more than that. This Gospel is a lesson in God's mercy and God's patience.

This garden is life itself. And life is filled with both the good and the bad. Why does God allow the bad to grow side by side with the good? Wouldn't it be better if God eliminated the bad? Why does God let things go unchecked? How can God allow evil to grow great?

This Gospel is a response to that question. For the Word of God is teaching us that God's kingdom grows slowly...it doesn't happen overnight. God wants this kingdom to grow slowly because God wants what is evil and what is bad, what has fallen away and what has rejected the good, to have the opportunity to change. Rather than destroy the evil, God is offering that which gives evil a second chance.

God loves all of creation...each and every one of us. God loves the Israeli as much as God loves the Palestinian. God loves the pure of heart as much as God loves those who seek after evil. And in this world of struggle and war, peace and addiction, heroism and selfishness God plants a seed...the smallest of seeds. And that mustard seed is God's love reaching out to us and inviting us to work to build God's kingdom. The mustard seed of God's love is the long-suffering creative patience of God that invites us to turn away from evil and to always work for the good.

In the end, that which is evil will have to face the justice of God. In the end God will conquer evil. But until that point the Word of God invites us as individuals, as neighbors, as a community, as a nation to turn away from the dark and embrace the light that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world.