

Sixteenth Sunday Ordinary Time
† Sunday, 19 July 2020



In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

For a deeper understanding between Christians, Jews, and Moslems

Keynote: The growth of the kingdom of God

Book of Wisdom 12: 13, 16-19

Wisdom speaking of the God of Israel, tells us, *'There is no god other than you, who cares for everything... your justice has its source in strength... you govern with great lenience.'* This example of a caring, loving and just god is an example for us, and how we might live our lives. Addressing the One True Living God, Wisdom says, *'You have taught a lesson to your people, how the virtuous person must be kindly to others and you have given us hope that after sin you will grant repentance.'* To appreciate these thoughts, we need to understand just how far away these ideas were from the pagan notions of that time – for the pagan gods were seen as vengeful, gods of anger and fear. Even now in our more secular age we might realise just how many people in our own time misunderstand the God in whom we believe, failing to appreciate, or not having learned about the tenderness – the mercy and compassion of the loving God.

Responsorial Psalm 85 [86] – A gentle psalm of confidence in God's love

Letter of Paul to the Romans 8: 26-27

Another mark of the new life which is open to the Christian, Paul tells us is, *'The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he (the Spirit) means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.'*

Gospel according to Matthew 13: 24-43

Last week Matthew began a series of seven parables about the Kingdom. The Aramaic word translated as 'kingdom' does not equate to a secular empire or kingdom. Jesus is speaking of a movement and the coming into being of the reign of God in the midst of the world, essentially working like yeast in the hearts and lives of each of us, as his disciples.

In two sections, the first about the 'darnel' – the weed sown with the good grain, Jesus teaches the people about the nature of God's kingdom. This, not only shows the alert concern of the householder's servants, but also the patience and the tolerance of the master who waits until harvest time to gather the good grain into the barn. The second set of parables today, speak of how, apparently, from almost hidden small beginnings great things begin to happen – *'The kingdom of God is like the yeast a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through.'* Or, *'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... the smallest of all the seeds, but when it is grown it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree.'* The reign of God will appear and grow to maturity relentlessly.

Later Jesus withdraws with his disciples, and in the house he explains to them in more detail the meaning of these lessons of faith.