

LIVING FAITH

16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 19, 2026



THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY—Matthew 13:24-30

Jesus put before them another parable:

‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep,

an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away.

So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.

And the slaves of the householder came and said to him,

“Master, did you not sow good seed in your field?

Where, then, did these weeds come from?”

He answered, “An enemy has done this.”

The slaves said to him, “Then do you want us to go and gather them?”

But he replied, “No;

for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.

Let both of them grow together until the harvest;

and at harvest time I will tell the reapers,

‘Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned,

but gather the wheat into my barn.”’

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

A parable is a story that makes sense if you take it at surface level, but always has an even deeper meaning. This story, on the surface, is about a farmer and the good seed he sows, and an enemy who sows weeds among the wheat. But, right at the start of this parable, Jesus tells us that it is really a story about the Kingdom of God. Jesus talked often about the Kingdom of God, and told a number of stories to illustrate what the Kingdom was like. In this parable, Jesus uses images that would have been very familiar to the people he was talking to—fields, good seed that gets mixed with weeds, neighbours with a grudge who might try to ruin your crop, and a wise farmer who knows that if you pull out the weeds at the beginning, you also ruin your own crop; but if you wait until the end, it’s easier to sort the weeds from the wheat, and save your crop.

TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- If this parable is not really about a wheat and weeds, what do you think it’s really about?
- What do you think this Gospel teaches us about the Kingdom of God?
- Who do you think the Sower really is? Who is the enemy?
- Why does the farmer advise his workers not to pull out the weeds immediately, but wait until the harvest?

JESUS TEACHES THROUGH PARABLES THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus was a truly great teacher. When he taught people, he often used parables. Parables are stories that stick in our minds. We remember them easily. That's because parables are stories that work at two different levels. At the first level, the surface level, parables make sense. They are good stories in themselves. But there is a deeper level to the parables that Jesus tells. There is a story beneath the story! In a parable, every element stands for something else; everything takes on a deeper meaning. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God as something that is both yet to come, and also something that is in our midst. The coming of the Kingdom was announced by Jesus Christ, and we are called to be members of that Kingdom.

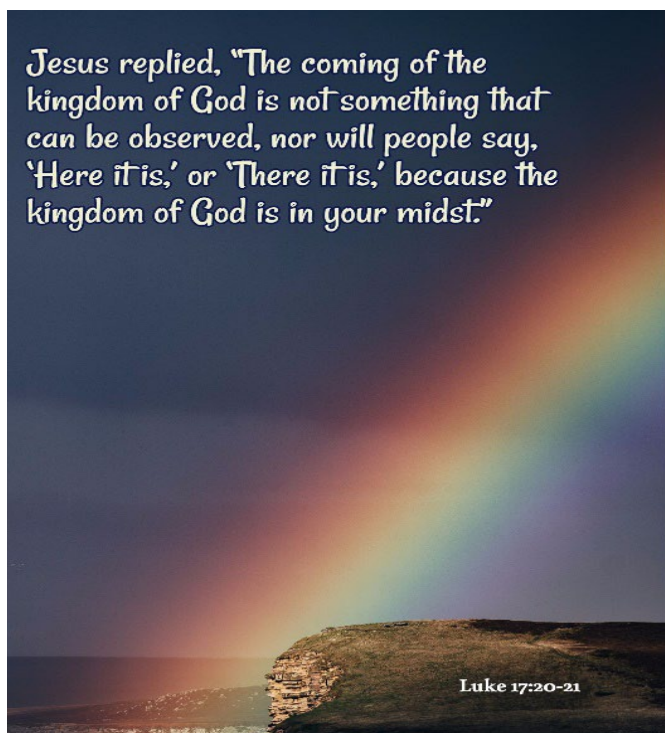
The Kingdom of heaven was inaugurated on earth by Christ. "This kingdom shone out before men in the word, in the works, and in the presence of Christ" (*Lumen Gentium* 5). The Church is the seed and beginning of this kingdom. Her keys are entrusted to Peter. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 567)



In the New Testament, the word *basileia* can be translated by "kingship" (abstract noun), "kingdom" (concrete noun) or "reign" (action noun). The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate, it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel, and it has come in Christ's death and Resurrection. The Kingdom of God has been coming since the Last Supper and, in the Eucharist, it is in our midst. The kingdom will come in glory when Christ hands it over to his Father: It may even be . . . that the Kingdom of God means Christ himself, whom we daily desire to come, and whose coming we wish to be manifested quickly to us. For as he is our resurrection, since in him we rise, so he can also be understood as the Kingdom of God, for in him we shall reign. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2816)



By living with the mind of Christ, Christians *hasten the coming of the Reign of God*, "a kingdom of justice, love, and peace." They do not, for all that, abandon their earthly tasks; faithful to their master, they fulfill them with uprightness, patience, and love. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2046)



SAINTS ANNE AND JOACHIM
JULY 26
PARENTS OF MARY
GRANDPARENTS OF JESUS

The New Testament contains no specific information about the lives of the Virgin Mary's parents, but other documents outside of the Biblical canon do provide some details.

The "Protoevangelium of James," which was probably put into its final written form in the early second century, describes Mary's father Joachim as a wealthy member of one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

St. Joachim and St. Anne have been a part of the Church's liturgical calendar for many centuries. They are revered in many First Nations communities as wise elders, the grandparents of Jesus.



Message from Pope Leo
6th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly
I will never forget you (Is 49:15)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord promises that he will never forget any of us. He assures us that he has engraved our faces on the palms of his hands (cf. Is 49:16) and that his love is greater than a mother's love for her child (cf. Is 49:15). The prophet gives us a glimpse of an intimate and intense dialogue in which God addresses, in familiar terms, each person individually and the people as a whole. Even today, we can read these words as referring to each of us, and everyone can hear that "I will never forget you" spoken directly to them.

These are words that fill us with comfort and hope. They are the answer to an agonizing feeling that troubles the heart: "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me" (Is 49:14). How often in Sacred Scripture, especially in the Psalms, does prayer spring from the despair of those who feel that their lives are of no interest to anyone and are being neglected! The painful feeling of being forgotten is, unfortunately, shared by many people, and among them are quite a few elderly people. God's love, which forgets no one, offers itself as an act of justice and a response to the anonymity in which human life all too often ends up lost. The lives of many elderly people, in particular, seem to be covered by a veil that blurs the features of their faces and shrouds them in oblivion. This is what happens in homes where loneliness reigns and also in those care facilities where each person's uniqueness risks being reduced to a bed number or an illness.

The celebration of the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to rediscover that the Church is called to be a mother to all and that at any age it is always possible to recognize ourselves as sons and daughters of God. May this day, therefore, be an inspiration for everyone, especially the young, to revive the beautiful custom of visiting their grandparents, the elderly members of the family and even those who have no one to visit them. Bring them, through this message and your presence, the closeness and affection of the Pope. Ensure that the words of the prophet, “But I will never forget you,” take the form of a tender and affectionate encounter. “In an era that favors speed and fragmentation, the human person still yearns to receive care and recognition from attentive minds, kind words and hands capable of tenderness. The digital culture multiplies connections and offers new opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness” (Encyclical Letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, 239).

The Church understands the suffering of her elderly members; she knows full well that they are all too often viewed through the lens of stereotypes and considered a burden; she is aware that a profit-driven economy weakens family ties; she knows that many elderly people are left behind by children who are forced to migrate or, in some cases, to fight in wars. For each of these reasons, she joyfully proclaims the Lord’s promise: “But I will never forget you!”

It is a joy, at any age, but especially when we are no longer young, to discover, as John Paul I said, that we are the recipients “of undying love on the part of God. We know: he has always his eyes open on us, even when it seems to be dark. He is our father; even more he is our mother” (Angelus, 10 September 1978). Even if it does not come naturally to think this way, the truth is that even in old age we do not cease to be sons and daughters; therefore, the invitation to return to the arms of God — whose love is both paternal and maternal — remains worthwhile at any age.

For many, the discovery of God’s tenderness takes place over the course of their lives, sometimes even in its final stages. Indeed, unlike in the past, it is increasingly common to reach old age without having had a genuine experience of faith. In such cases, old age — beginning with the questions that arise with greater urgency during this season of life — can become the right time to begin or resume a spiritual life. On this new journey, one can recognize that God, as Saint Augustine says, “is a mother because he cherishes, because he nourishes, because he nurses, because he protects” (Commentary on Psalm 27, II, 18). It is an awareness that helps us not to feel ashamed of the fragility that emerges and also to understand that we are always in need of one another and in need of attention and care. To God, who draws near to us and whom we learn to recognize in his tenderness, we can now turn with filial trust in prayer. It is never too late to begin turning to him. It can be a great gift for everyone.

Dear elderly men and women, Pope Francis spoke of you as a “new people” (Catechesis, 23 February 2022), since the number of older adults has never been so large in human history. It is, therefore, more important than ever to reflect with you, this “new people,” on what our vocation might be when fragility — the human person’s companion from birth — seems to take over. I would like to say to you: do not be afraid of fragility! It is precisely this weakness that holds within itself a new potential that also illuminates the other stages of life. Indeed, when “we acknowledge our fragility, our hearts become open to supporting one another and to invoking the One who can grant what no human power can ensure: the profound reconciliation of hearts and, with it, true peace” (Meeting with the Algerian community, Basilica of Our Lady of Africa, Algiers, 13 April 2026).

This is how we can live out our old age as Christians: “fragile” yet at the same time “called.” A man and a woman can, in fact, be born anew in old age (cf. Jn 3:4-6) and exclaim, with the prophet: “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength” (Is 30:15). This strength can become an invitation not to resort to the ways of arrogance and power to ensure human coexistence, but to the ways of reconciliation and true peace. In this time, so harshly marked by the violence of war and social unrest, many wonder what the world in which their grandchildren will grow up will be like. I urge you, dear friends, to join me in praying earnestly that peace may soon come to the whole world.

Dear elderly brothers and sisters, I thank you for supporting me every day with your prayers, especially when you recite the Holy Rosary. I return this gratitude from the bottom of my heart and leave you with this prayer: may the Lord always renew us in faith, hope and love — He who never forgets us!

From the Vatican 15 June 2026

LEO PP. XIV