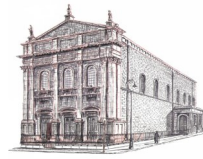




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

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Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm.: 087 9117575 Office:

Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council

Jesus I Trust in You E-mail : office@stagathaparish.ie Website: www.stagathaparish.ie

DEVIL IS OUR ADVERSARY (ENEMY), SAYS THE POPE

The parable in the Gospel today (Matt 13:24-43), Pope Francis explains, the Master of the field is God, “who only and always sows good seed,” and whose “goal is a good harvest.” The adversary is the Devil, “God’s quintessential opponent” who, out of “envy and hostility” seeks to destroy the work of God. “The devil’s intention is to hinder the work of salvation, to stonewall the kingdom of God through wicked workers, the sowers in scandal,” the Pope said. The wheat and the weeds are not a symbol of abstract good and evil, but a representation of human beings, “who can follow God or the devil.

CALLED TO BE PATIENT

The Pope noted how we hear about a family or a community who was in peace suddenly is divided by conflict, envy. "Nasty things begin to happen," he said remarking on how we accuse someone of sowing gossip". "It is always the devil or our temptations if we fall into the temptation to gossip and destroy others," he said. Pope Francis contrasts the desire of the servants “to eliminate evil – that is, evil people – immediately,” with the plan of God, which is wiser and more far-seeing. The disciples of Jesus, he said, are called to be patient, to focus on saving the wicked, rather than suppressing them.

DO NOT GOSSIP OR SPREAD RUMOURS

“Today’s Gospel presents two ways of acting and living history,” the Pope said: “the vision of the Master on the one hand, that of the servants on the other.” While the servants are focused on ridding the field of weeds, the master is concerned with the good wheat, and knows how to protect it “even amongst the weeds.” Pope Francis warned against “those who are always hunting for the limitations and defects of others.” Instead, it is “those who know how to recognise the good that silently grows in the field of the Church and history, cultivating it to maturity,” who are able to collaborate in the vision of God. In the end, he said, “it will be God, and He alone, who will reward the good, and punish the wicked.”

TO LIVE IN SIN CONDEMNS OURSELVES ON JUDGEMENT DAY

“Between us”, the Pope said, “we can say that even today the soil has been infested with so many herbicides, weed killers and poisons that do harm to ourselves and the earth. The Pope encouraged us to live a spiritual healthy life.

GOSPEL OF TRUTH ALERTS US TO SATAN’S PRESENCE IN THE WORLD

Like a Snake, Satan continues to hide today, like a weed infecting a healthy harvest (us) in a field (Church), which symbolises this world and certain sectors of the Church. In the Gospel today (Mt 13:24-32), Jesus explains how Evilness is like a parasite, latching onto Goodness. We must never forget that on our Judgement Day, Jesus will separate the hidden and visible Evil from the Good. It is God who sows the Good Seed, who is Jesus and His teaching Words. The Good Seed is to grow in our hearts enlightening us to avoid sin, so we will be found worthy to enter the Kingdom of God someday. The dandelion is a weed (sin), harmful to the harvest (soul) and sneakily planted in our hearts by Satan. How does he do it? If we oppose Church teachings and live in fear and according to our own Will, then we have allowed Satan plant the seed of sin in our hearts. Dandelion becomes visible when we exercise anger, pride, gossip & impatience. Jesus in His infinite patience is giving us a time to change before the Day of Judgement, when we’ll be held accountable.

JESUS I TRUST IN YOU

St. Patrick is credited for converting our Irish pagan ancestors into practicing Christians, by enlightening pagan minds with the Paschal Flame of Faith. He made us aware of the Presence of Christ in our hearts. He is depicted by the image of driving snakes out of Ireland. This image symbolised the Evil presence of Satan in human hearts. The Devil never went too far away. Most Irish Christians have sadly returned to pagan anti-Christian roots, not believing in God, by replacing Him with the Golden Calf of worldly possessions and falsehoods. The devil is a snake-like virus attacking the world under a cloak of confusion. He *prowls around like a roaring lion* (1 Peter 5:8), bringing panic to the flock. We must turn to Jesus the Shepherd, in full trust, to protect us from the venomous ‘snake’ bite of fear and eternal death. Jesus says; **Do not be afraid, Trust in Me.**

DO NOT BE FOOLED BY FALSE TEACHINGS OF MANKIND

St. Paul warns us not to be dependent on ourselves (2 Tim 4:1-8), to learn how to protect ourselves by listening and obeying the teachings of the Gospel of Truth by trusting in God to help and rescue us. To *fight the good fight* is nothing to do with fighting life’s disappointments, but fighting a spiritual battle against the evil Devil. To fight the virus or the disease of sin with the Help of Jesus and His Rules. The Sacrament of Confession allows Jesus to gently remove the ‘dandelion’ of sin from our souls. Sadly many are not listening to the Spirit of Truth (Jesus), but listening to the spirit of evil planted by the devil. Paul asks us to *be brave in times of trials* and not to lose faith and hope in Jesus. Today, St. Paul (Rom 8:26-28), tells us to rely on the Spirit of God who *comes to help us in our weakness.*

HARVEST OF LOVE AND MERCY AND CHARITY

Souls who reject the Good Seed, by never practicing their Faith or Repenting for their sins in Confession, risk the very real possibility of ending up in Hell. If Jesus finds our souls on Judgement Day, still tied to sin, then He compares us to the dandelion or wasteful weed which will be *bundled* together and *burnt* or thrown into *the blazing furnace, at the end of time.* The Good News is that the heart who imitated Christ in life, will be led into the Glorious Barn of Heaven, *shining like the sun.* It is our duty and care to nurture this seed of Faith which was planted in our hearts in Baptism, and allow it to divinely grow in the charitable loving image of Jesus, by practicing His Teachings and believe that He created the world. Let us all believe that if we turn to Him trustingly in Mass, Prayer and the Daily Rosary, the world will be healed in this time of testing and trials. God bless. Fr. Brendan