

**Let them grow together until the harvest...**

The 'parable of the wheat and weeds' illustrates the reality of our life as well. We know for sure, in real life wheat does not turn into weeds nor do the weeds into wheat. We are naturally very proud to be among wheat (good people) and irritated with weeds (evil people). We are like the servant in the parable ready to pull up the weeds, not realizing that little words of affirmation, encouragement and empowerment could turn the bad and ugly into beautiful souls.

God allows both good and evil to exist side by side until the harvest. This does not mean God approves evil. On the contrary, evil will have a severe punishment on the last day. God could win the battle in a moment by destroying right away anyone opposing His kingdom, but He does not do so. He has a good reason to delay because He is powerful but at the same time, kind and patient with the wicked. He gives enough time and opportunity for the wicked to repent and return to Him. Of-course God's delay is in favor of the wicked and who would not like this way.

There is no one who is completely good or completely evil on this earth. Only God is completely good and the devil is completely evil. God and the devil do not go together. God sows good seed and the devil sows bad seed to separate us from the love of God and His kingdom. No one becomes a saint or sinner in an instant. Lifelong friendship begins with a tiny smile or a bitter fight with a tiny misunderstanding. Whether a great deed or a great sin, both have a small beginning. We all have good and evil in us; it may be just tiny like the mustard seed but it is indeed hidden in us. We are called to recognize the good in ourselves and each other; nurture and nourish the seeds of goodness so that they can take deep roots and bear abundant fruits of the kingdom. And at times, we are challenged to recognize the evil in ourselves and others, uproot it with kindness filled with patience, but do it before it become a sinful habit preventing us from entering into God's Kingdom.

Friar Manoj