

I can barely believe what Jesus said about the weeds. I mean, he's a religious reformer. Religious reformers know the dangers of complacency. They want everything holy, right and pure. They want the weeds out, and they want them out now.

Reformers can be counted on to pass petitions around against this disrespectful movie, or that off-center form of sexuality, or different definitions (maybe distorted definitions) of marriage, or dangerous extensions of liberty and tolerance.

Jesus, isn't it time to start attacking these weeds?

And he replies, at least in today's Gospel, "No. The weeds and the wheat grow closely together. If you're too tough with the weeds, the wheat may get disoriented, scandalized, misplaced as well. The Master will take care of the weeding, at harvest time."

Which provoked a little conversation between God and me.

"God, why do you appear to intervene so little to put order in the world. There are horrible weeds in your garden."

And God answers: "There's no other God for me to answer to, so I'll be God in exactly the way I please. I maintain some bounds, so the world doesn't destroy itself. And I'm present on the other side of death to take out the stingers of evil and death to populate the new kingdom. But otherwise ... I prefer patience and leniency."

I answer: "Well, lots of people would appreciate it if you could be a little more assertive."

God chuckles: "Yes, I suppose they would ... you would. You don't realize just how forbearing I've been with your own sins. As for acting brutally, I won't. When you humans use brute force, it's usually because you've lost authority, are out of control, are trying to hide your weakness or are scared. I can show patience, restraint and moderation because I know I'm right, I'm not scared, and I have my own time and way for resolving things."

"God, what would you have me do?"

"There are times when I'll want you to speak, squawk, challenge and get in people's faces. You're responsible to help each others --- and one of the ways to do that is to rebuke and reprove. But don't race to it. Test yourself, to make sure you're acting in my name instead of just letting your insecurity or righteousness or perfectionism or anger take over. Pray, discern. Question yourself. It won't be easy knowing when to be assertive and when to be lenient ... but if you're open, you'll be guided by my Spirit, coming to help you in your weakness."

Today's Gospel tells me clearly that it's not worth it, even to God, to make a big fuss about everything. All you parents know this. There is a time to be picky ... and a time to be picky about being picky.