

**Homily – Father Brad Neely**  
**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle A**  
**Sts. Peter and Paul; Nezperce: July 17,**  
**2011**  
**Wis 12: 13f; Rom 8: 26f; Mt 13: 24-43**

I hear often in the Catholic media  
that many people in these days  
don't believe in hell.

The non-existence of hell  
makes the main parable in the Gospel  
quite perplexing to understand today,  
as the parable of the sower  
points pretty handily to this supposed  
“nonexistent” realm of hell.

We dipped our toes  
in the world of parables last Sunday.  
Again, one of the definitions of “parable”  
I've come across recently is:  
“a comparison drawn from nature or  
common life,  
fascinating the hearer  
by its vividness or strangeness,  
and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt  
of its precise application---  
[*in other words*] to tease [the mind]  
into active thought.” (C. H. Dodd):

In the parable of the sower  
in today's Gospel passage,  
Jesus likened the  
*“the kingdom of heaven to a man  
who sowed good seed in his field....”*  
As we know, the field was subsequently  
sabotaged  
with the planting of weeds.  
The sower decided  
to let the wheat and the weeds  
coexist until harvest time,  
at which time the weeds  
would be separated and burned.

To recap, Jesus explained to his disciples  
that:

The sower of the good seed is **God---**

the field is the **world---**

the good seed the **children of the kingdom---**

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the sower of the weeds is the **devil---**

the weeds are **the children of the evil one---**

the harvest is **the end of time---**

the harvesters are **angels---**

At harvest time,

the weeds—the children of the evil one

will be cast in the fiery furnace,

while the righteous will shine

like the sun in the kingdom of heaven.

This all seems fairly clear cut.

The question is,

why would there be those

who would not believe in the existence of  
hell?

Christ's church defines hell as:

“the state of definitive self-exclusion  
from communion with God and the blessed,  
reserved for those who refuse  
by their own free choice  
to believe and be converted from sin,  
even to the end of their lives.” (ccc1033)

Note some of the phrases here:

\* self-exclusion – God doesn't exclude us,  
we exclude ourselves.

\* reserved for those who refuse to believe...

\* reserved for those who will not convert  
from sin...

One of the books I'm perusing currently is  
Come Home...the Door is Open,

by Louise D'Angelo.

Louise, in her book,

speaks of the harvest time

that Jesus refers to in our Gospel passage.

On our day of reckoning, she maintains,

we will be facing God

on His terms, not ours.

We will see God as He truly is,

and we will see ourselves as we truly are.

This is fascinating.

D'Angelo also poses some poignant  
questions:

\*do we look at ourselves  
and think we are just fine in God's eyes?---  
that God will understand?---  
that God will save us in the end?  
\*do we believe that we will be truly  
responsible  
for all of our personal rejections of God's  
grace?  
\*do we believe that God  
can be placed within the limitations  
of our own faulty human reasoning?  
\*can we mold God  
into the kind of God we want Him to be?---  
a god blind?—  
a god deaf?—  
a god afraid to say that we are wrong?

Louise suggests that if someone  
denounces God's ways,  
in whatever measure.....  
denounces His Church,  
His laws,  
and His teaching,  
that person should not be fooled  
by God's apparent silence. (D'Angelo)  
Silence here is not a nod of the head.

But, I would suggest myself  
that God is *not* silent on the subject  
of the end harvest times.  
Proof of that is the parable  
we have in today's Gospel.  
God is speaking to us through His Word.  
God has spoken to us  
through all that has been revealed,  
and it is sufficient for our salvation

The exclamation point  
on what God teaches us  
in the parable of the sower  
is given by His Son, Jesus, who tells us:  
"whoever has ears ought to hear."