

was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.'

"'You better sit down, Lord,' begged Francis. 'As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.'

"'No!?' shouted God. 'What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?'

"'Well, after throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch,' answered Francis. 'They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.'

"'And where do they get this mulch?' asked an incredulous Creator of the world.

"'Sheepishly replied Francis, 'They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.'" (Original source unknown)

Indeed, God seems to be reminding us in light-hearted fashion that things have gotten really messed up. We earthlings seem to be working against the created order as we attempt to "manage" God's good creation. And if we have messed up badly in lawn care, have we done the same with "people care"?

The gospel passage we hear today invites us into this challenging consideration when Jesus says, *"Let the weeds and the wheat 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.'"* (Matthew 13:30)

Indeed, I wonder if, perhaps, we've lost the ability to distinguish weeds from wheat. Can we no longer see the perfection of God's creating hand in this person or that person? Do we deem this one a weed, that one true wheat? Have we arrived at such a place where we believe our own judgment a match for God's?

While a silly dialogue between God and St. Francis points up the foolishness of the way we care for our lawns, let us humbly admit that our ability to distinguish weed from wheat in the human arena may be just as foolish. Indeed, separating weeds from wheat is a task best left to God.

Fr. Bob deLeon, C.S.C., presently serves as Chaplain at St. Joseph Center, Valatie, NY, a health care facility serving the needs of Holy Cross Brothers. Previous to this, he ministered as a hospital chaplain for 40 years.



A publication of the Congregation of Holy Cross,
United States Province of Priests and Brothers
Office of Development
P.O. Box 765, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-0765
www.holycrossusa.org
development@holycrossusa.org

JULY 2020



MONTHLY REFLECTION SERIES

All Will Be Well and All Manner
of Things Will Be Well

Rev. Robert deLeon, C.S.C.



“Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest ...”

“Let the weeds and the wheat 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.’” (Matthew 13:30)

This gospel passage from St. Matthew has direct application to what busies so many these summer days - tending lawns, caring for gardens, farming crops. But as we bustle about bursting bloom, Jesus calls us to a deeper consideration. He calls us to consider the garden of our souls. Let a concocted dialogue between God and St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of all things living, great and small, set the stage.

“Addressing St. Francis, God said, ‘You know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-

lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But all I see are these green rectangles.’

“Replied St. Francis, ‘It’s the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites.

butterflies, birds and bees, only grubs and sod worms. It’s sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?’

“‘Apparently so, Lord,’ replied Francis. ‘They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by



They started calling your flowers “weeds” and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.’

“‘Grass?’ exclaimed God. ‘But it’s so boring. It’s not colorful. It doesn’t attract

fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.’

“God continued, ‘The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the

Suburbanites happy.’

“‘Apparently not, Lord,’ said Francis. ‘As soon as it grows a little, they cut it—sometimes twice a week.’

“Shocked, God replied, ‘They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?’

“‘Not exactly, Lord,’ gently replied Francis. ‘Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.’

“The confused Creator continued, ‘They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?’

“‘No, sir,’ replied St. Francis, ‘just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.’

“‘Now, let me get this straight,’ said God. ‘They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?’

“‘Yes, sir,’ replied Francis.

“‘Then,’ said God, ‘these Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.’

“Francis replied, ‘You aren’t going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.’

“‘What nonsense!’ exclaimed God. ‘At least they kept some of the trees. That