

## **“Living Well” Devotionals**

Matthew 13:24-30, from the Gospel for July 19, 2020

*[Jesus said] "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat....So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them 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.' "*

One of the things the coronavirus pandemic has taught us is just how impatient we are. We Americans are so accustomed to having whatever we want when we want it...but the pandemic is forcing us to be patient and wait--particularly to wait patiently until a safe, effective vaccine is available.

Patience is a virtue, we say, but we're much better at being impatient....even though impatience can be dangerous. We're seeing that right now, as the coronavirus surges because so many folks are trying to return to normal—even though our old version of “normal” is gone, and our next normal has yet to arrive.

This parable of the weeds in the wheat is about patience. Eager-beaver farmhands want to root out the weeds now—but their boss commands them to be patient, because he knows that only when the fields ripen will it be clear which plants are wheat and which are weeds.

“Be patient!” commands the boss...wait until the time is right, when the plants are all ripe.

In less than a month our all-virtual synod assembly will be held, and one of the main items of business will be to elect a new synod bishop.

We've been waiting for this opportunity for over 7 months--since December 3 of last year--when Bishop Terry Brandt announced his resignation.

You might be wondering: "Why is it taking so long to Call a new bishop?" After all, large organizations hire new CEOs all the time, in much less time than we're taking.

But you see, our synod years ago decided that whenever we call a new bishop (something that's happened only four times since 1988!)...we're going to be patient, and take time to ponder and pray and dwell in God's Word and pray and identify potential nominees and pray and have conversations and pray and think and pray....and only after that long process will we vote, in synod assembly, begging God to guide us as together we all call forth our next shepherd.

This long process isn't about dilly-dallying. Rather: it's about diving into deep discernment, all of us together, listening to God. Calling a new bishop (we might say) is more like cooking with a crock pot than cooking with a microwave oven.!

And so we pray: slow us down, give us patience, help us discern with one another, attune our ears to hear what you, O Lord, are telling us. In the name of Jesus.  
Amen.