



Vincent van Gogh, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21987773>

Dear Friends,

What a little wheat kernel the parable of the wheat and the weeds is! All that keen observation of human suffering and questioning and overconfidence in our own abilities to solve everything! And what a strange and wonderful description of our Saviour and our God; the patient, patient farmer. I hope I did some of that justice on Sunday.

In the lead up to a sermon, I often read Suzanne Guthrie's blog – <http://edgeofenclosure.org/>

Suzanne has served the American Episcopal church as a parish priest, a children's priest, a Christian Education consultant, columnist on children's spirituality and as a university chaplain. She draws on an incredible range of Christian writing to curate guided reflections for prayer and meditation because, as she says, *"I'm interested in questions about how people "learn" to discern layers of consciousness of the Holy. And I'm particularly fascinated by the unending mystery of prayer itself."*

Her blog is a barn full of little wheat kernels! But here is her reflection on last Sunday's parable that I wanted to share with you.

I don't need an enemy sneaking into my field to sow darnel into my sprouting wheat. I sabotage myself quite effectively, thank you very much. Later I have the painstaking work of separating the weeds entwined with the wheat. And so the burning of the tares begins long before the final day. Sins, mistakes, flaws, all kinds of soul-debris fuel the continually smouldering fire. Once in a while some chunk of the psyche loosens and falls out of hiding, letting in the air and stirring up a new conflagration.

This time of climate, political, and societal stress uncovers a whole multitude of previously ignored, shelved, we-know-but-now-is-not-a-good-time- set of sins, in society and culture and in me. Racism. Greed. Apathy. To mention just three. How about you?

We know that It's not enough to do this all on the societal, cultural, and institutional level alone, as monumental as that is. We also have to do our own inner work alongside of activism.

*Here's a distraction. While I'm untangling my harvest I sneak a look around at the other sinners. My assessment of others' bundles distracts me from the work at hand. Ha! I'm not so bad as this one or that. Pat on the back. *sigh*. One would hope that attending regularly to my own sins might draw forth deep compassion for other sinners sowing seeds of self-destruction. But does it?*

*Just as wasteful as my rush to judgement, is my jealousy of others who seem to handle their mixed harvest of wheat and tares better than I. Again, *sigh*.*

You know what I've learned? If you ask other sinners to help - whether they are the ones you are judging or the ones of whom you are jealous - they will help you. The ones you're jealous of usually turn out to be master sinners but know through arduous and painful inner work how to deftly handle the mess of life. They will even help you with your bundle, but (wisely) not so thoroughly that you don't learn how to bring your darnels honestly to the cleansing fire.

Let's not "perish together as fools" (Martin Luther King). Let's do the work - both inner work and activism - together.

-Suzanne

Amen to that!

Grace and peace be with you,

Belinda