

Father Dave's Weekly Homily

07/17/11 16 A

-- *It ain't over till it's over....* Those of us who are old enough may recognize that as one of the famous sayings of Yogi Berra, the Yankees catcher and later, for a few years, their manager. Those who are a little younger may remember the song of that name by Lenny Kravitz, based on the Yogi Berra saying.

-- Last summer in August I finally attended a Red's game at the Great American Ballpark. The last Red's game I'd attended was eight years before—too long for a fan who has three siblings in the greater Cincinnati area. It was the first of a three game series with the Cardinals during the thick of the division race.

-- It was hot and the Reds were five runs down when we decided to leave with an inning to go. As we were a block or two from the stadium we could hear the cheers and the sound of the towers blowing the smoke that comes with a Red's home run.

-- In my case, that score was not sufficient for the Reds to catch up. But many times during that season they had displayed 9th inning heroics to snatch victory from a certain defeat. So much for giving up!

-- Jesus' parable about the wheat and the weeds echoes Yogi Berra's saying on a much more important level—the question of where we will spend eternal life. He speaks about God's patience in dealing with good and evil in the world.

-- And he lets us know in no uncertain terms that good and evil are mixed together in our world... and in us. This makes them hard to sort out on the surface.

-- The weeds that grew in the fields of Palestine were hard to distinguish from the young wheat at first. And their roots tangled together, so that you would pull up the wheat while trying to pull weeds.

-- So, too, even within ourselves, impulses to good and evil are tangled together. St. Thomas Aquinas said that we don't choose evil because it's

evil but because it appears to us to be good. His wisdom stands firm some 750 years after his death.

-- Still, when we see what we believe is evil, we are impatient. We want to deal with it NOW. Just think about how we felt after 9-11. We wanted to strike back, and we were not always patient in determining where the true evil was coming from.

-- Jesus counsels us to patience and forbearance. He does so, not because evil doesn't exist, but because good and evil are so tangled together, like the roots of the weeds and the wheat. It takes time to sort them out.

-- And not only that: in God's plan, evil can be transformed into good. Weeds can turn into wheat by the healing power of God. Our responsorial psalm says *Lord, you are good and forgiving*. God gives us a second chance—again and again—to return to him.

-- It is easy to make snap judgments, to write someone off as hopeless. Too often that's what happens in our prison systems. God looks at things differently. No one is beyond hope in God's eyes, so we should not write them off, either.

-- And when we are tempted to give up on ourselves...when we feel we can't be cured of our sinfulness...we must call upon the One who is good and forgiving. The Lord can transform our hearts.

-- It is true: it ain't over till it's over. And the stakes are much higher than the result of a baseball game. They determine our life with God himself. God doesn't give up on us. Let's not give up on ourselves...or anyone else, for that matter.