Parables are not just quaint stories,
but are meant to be: unsettling, troubling, puzzling,
annoying, provoking, engaging.

Ordinarily the parable gets interpreted this way –
there are good people (wheat)
and bad people (weeds) in the world, in the Church.
Don’t try to separate them or you may discard the good with the bad.
God will take care of judging between good and bad at the last judgement.
The good/righteous will shine like the sun.
The bad will be thrown into the fiery furnace.

My sense is that interpretation leaves most of us with lots of anxiety
about whether I’m in or out, good or bad, saved or condemned,
wheat or weeds.

I want to suggest another way of looking at the parable
that may be more consistent with
the image of God Jesus consistently conveys in the Gospels.

Could it be that Jesus is saying that inside each one of us
are wheat and weeds.
We must be careful about trying to uproot the weeds in us
or we may also destroy the wheat.

Eventually God will find a way of burning off what is “weeds” in us,
transforming us into pure wheat
and bringing us home.

If you’ve ever done any gardening
you soon become very aware that if you try to grow “good” stuff,
weeds are also going to grow.
No matter how much you try to get rid of them,
weeds continue to pop up.

Definition of a WEED:
Wikipedia defines a weed as
“a plant considered undesirable in a particular situation.”
Of course the next question must be “What is undesirable to whom?”

In the parable the servants saw the weeds as undesirable.
The owner saw the servants’ impatience and arrogance as undesirable.
What needs to be eliminated here?

Two tasks for us as Christians:
   - Nurture our own goodness
   - Nurture the goodness in others.

Life-coach, midwife
Greg Boyle — nurturer of young gang-bangers others would prefer to eliminate.

First reading
   - “Those who are just must be kind.”
   - “You gave your people good ground
     for hoping that you would permit repentance.”

Second reading
   - The Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints (us)
   - who do not know how to pray,
   - with sighs too deep for words.