

**1. Read (Seek)** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate (Find)** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray (Ask)** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate (Taste)** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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[1] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 4, 28.1

[2] cf. St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on St. Matthew, 47; St. Augustine, in Catena Aurea

[3] Fernandez, In Conversation with God 4, 28.1

[4] The Church's Year pg. 98

[5] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 824

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Matthew 13:24-43** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## Gospel Reading – Matthew 13:24-43 – Roman Missal

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?’ He answered, ‘An enemy has done this.’ His slaves said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ He replied, ‘No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, “First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn.” He proposed another parable to them. “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the ‘birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches.’” He spoke to them another parable. “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened.” All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables. He spoke to them only in parables, to fulfill what had been said through the prophet: *I will open my mouth in parables, I will announce what has lain hidden from the foundation of the world.* Then, dismissing the crowds, he went into the house. His disciples approached him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” He said in reply, “He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. Just as weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all who cause others to sin and all evildoers. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears ought to hear.”

## Spiritual Reading

*From Saint Ignatius of Antioch*

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the church at Magnesia on the Meander, a church blessed with the grace of God the Father in Christ

Jesus, our Savior, in whom I salute you. I send you every good wish in God the Father and in Jesus Christ. I was delighted to hear of your love of God, so well-ordered and devout, and so I decided to address you in the faith of Jesus Christ. Honored as I am with a name of the greatest splendor, though I am still in chains I sing with the praises of the churches, and pray that they be united with the flesh and the spirit of Jesus Christ, who is our eternal life; a union in faith and love, to which nothing must be preferred; and above all a union with Jesus and the Father, for if in him we endure all the power of the prince of this world, and escape unharmed, we shall make our way to God. I have had the honor of seeing you in the person of Damas your bishop, a man of God, and in the persons of your worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and my fellow-servant, the deacon Zotion; may I continue to take delight in him for he is obedient to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbyters as to the law of Jesus Christ. Now it hardly becomes you to presume on your bishop's youth, but rather, having regard to the power of God the Father, to show him every mark of respect. This, I understand, is what your holy presbyters do, not taking advantage of his youthful condition but deferring to him with the prudence which comes from God, or rather not to him but to the Father of Jesus Christ, to the bishop of all. So then, for the honor of him who loves us, it is proper to obey without hypocrisy; for a man does not so much deceive the bishop he can see as try to deceive the bishop he cannot see. In such a case he has to reckon not with a man, but with God who knows the secrets of the heart. We should then really live as Christians and not merely have the name; for many invoke the bishop's name but do everything apart from him. Such men, I think, do not have a good conscience, for they do not assemble lawfully as commanded. All things have an end, and two things, life and death, are side by side set before us, and each man will go *to his own place*. Just as there are two coinages, one of God and the other of the world, each with its own image, so unbelievers bear the image of this world, and those who have faith with love bear the image of God the Father through Jesus Christ. Unless we are ready through his power to die in the likeness of his passion, his life is not in us.

### **The Wheat and the Weeds – Lesson and Discussion**

*“The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field.”*

**What is the meaning behind the weed in this parable?** The weed that is sown in the parable is called cockle. This plant is often found in cereal crops in the Middle East. “It resembles wheat so closely that even to the farmer's practiced eye it is impossible to tell the two plants apart until the stalks begin to mature, at which stage the cockle can be recognized by its slender ear and emaciated grain; it is quite toxic to humans, and if mixed with flour will ruin bread.”[1] During the time of Jesus, a person would sabotage other person's crops by purposely sowing cockle to ruin a person's harvest. The metaphorical meaning behind this passage as taught by the Fathers of the Church is the sowing of cockle is like the spreading of false doctrine[2].

**Has this metaphor lost any of its' meaning?** One only has to take a look around the modern world for just a minute to realize that this parable has lost none of its' meaning. It is still relevant even to this day. “There is practically no truth of the Catholic Faith which hasn't been called into question.”[3] In the parable it seems that alongside every wheat, there also lies the cockle, and so it is in the world, where alongside every truth, there also lies a falsehood, a heresy. The proximity of the wheat to the cockle and the cockle to the wheat can be a blessing. There are many people that in their search for falsehood arrive at the truth that is growing right beside. People who have converted to the Catholic faith have shared that it was in trying to disprove the truth, that they found the truth.

**Who sows the good seed?** “The good seed is sown by Jesus, the Son of Man not only directly, but through His apostles, and the priests, their successors; the evil seed is sown by the devil, or by wicked men whom he uses as his tools.”[4]

**How does this parable represent us individually? How does it represent the Church?** Parables typically speak of Jesus' Kingdom, and this parable is no exception. The world is full of both wheat and weeds and because the Church is in the world it is not excused from this fact. The day Jesus comes back again is the Day of Judgment. He will come to “harvest” and separate the wheat from the weeds - the good souls and those who had done evil. Jesus explains this parable a little later in Matthew's Gospel 13:36-43. His explanation helps us to better understand and defend the Church when people ask how the Church can be holy if there are sinners in it. The Church is holy because it was not made by man, but by God. The Church is the Body of Christ and a body is made up of two primary parts, a head and members. In the Body of Christ the Church, Christ the head, is holy. The faithful who are the members of this Body are unholy. The head of the Body is perfect while the members are imperfect. The unholiness and imperfection of the members is not however a permanent state for the pilgrim Church. “United with Christ, the Church is sanctified by him; through him and with him she becomes sanctified. ‘All the activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, to the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God.’”[5] Members of the Body of Christ will be made holy and will give glory to God. The Church Militant (earth) and the Church Suffering (purgatory) is being made holy in the midst of unholy and does not at all times give glory to God. When the Pilgrim Church arrives at her destination it will be holy and it will give glory, all members will be what the head is already. The two, both head and members, will be one.