



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Heavenly Father,
Send your Holy Spirit
to open our minds and hearts.
With your grace,
grant us understanding of Your
gifts of human sexuality, marriage,
children, and family
according to Your divine plan.
Grow in us the virtues of chastity,
prudence, temperance, justice,
and fortitude.
Deepen our faith, hope, and love
so that we can love You and
our families and neighbors
as You love us!

Amen.

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture slowly, and if possible, out loud, two or three times.
(Matthew, 13:24–43)

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

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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.

Meditation (*Meditatio*)

After the reading, call upon the Holy Spirit to help you reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- ❖ **What word or phrase caught my attention?**
- ❖ **What did the word or phrase “say” to me?**
- ❖ **What comforted me?**
- ❖ **What challenged me?**

During this NFP Week where we celebrate God’s gifts of married love and the gift of life and learn about the ethical methods of Natural Family Planning, ask yourself a few more questions:

- ❖ **Do I understand and embrace the Lord God’s truth about the nature of human sexuality, marriage, and children?**
- ❖ **Do I understand why the Church teaches that contraceptive use is immoral, but the methods of Natural Family Planning are moral? (If “no” see references at end.)**
- ❖ **Do I strive to live the virtue of chastity—even in marriage (Do I know what that means; if “no” see references at end)?**



Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:

- ❖ **What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?**
- ❖ **Is my heart open to the Lord’s grace?**

Now, sit in silence and let the Holy Spirit speak to you.



Prayer (*Oratio*)

Praise the Lord and bring your concerns and petitions to Him.

After your conversation with the Lord, pause and be still in His presence.



Closing Prayer

Conclude your prayer with following psalm taken from today’s readings (Psalm 86: 5–6, 9–10, 15–16):

O LORD, You are good and forgiving,
abounding in kindness to all who call upon You.
Hearken, O LORD, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my pleading.

All the nations You have made shall come
and worship You, O LORD,
and glorify Your name.
For You are great, and You do wondrous deeds;
You alone are God.

You, O LORD, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in kindness and fidelity.
Turn toward me, and have pity on me;
give Your strength to Your servant.

Lord help me to love like You!

Amen.



Resources

Church teaching on love and human sexuality: This webpage summarizes Catholic teaching
<https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning/love-and-sexuality>

Humanae vitae: This papal document (encyclical) of the Catholic Church explains the nature of married love and the gift of life https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

Natural Family Planning (NFP): Where to learn about the ethical methods of NFP and to learn a method see <https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning>



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