

# September 30th: St. Jerome, presbyter and doctor of the Church

**Gospel text (Mt 13,47-52): Jesus said to his disciples, «Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a big fishing net let down into the sea, in which every kind of fish has been caught. When the net is full, it is dragged ashore. Then they sit down and gather the good fish in buckets, but throw the worthless ones away. That is how it will be at the end of time; the angels will go out to separate the wicked from the just and throw them into the blazing furnace, where they will weep and gnash their teeth». Jesus asked, «Have you understood all these things?». «Yes», they answered. So He said to them, «You will see that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom is like a householder who can produce from his store things both new and old».**

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*«A big fishing net let down into the sea, in which every kind of fish has been caught»*

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Today, we read the parable of the net that caught all kinds of fish. St. Jerome, the man of ancient times who more and better studied the Bible, places this parable in parallel with that of the wheat and tares. In both parables the good and the bad coexist, without the limits separating one from the other being set up. In real life, those of us who claim to be "good" may not be as much as we think; nor should those we consider "bad" be taken as lost cases. A change is always possible, and we can expect it in ourselves and in others. Pope Francis says that "now is a time of hope, and hope, in principle, does not rule out anything or anyone".

Jesus' mention of the blazing furnace, the weeping and gnashing of teeth (cf. Mt 13:50) does not pretend to hurt or discourage us. On the contrary, what He wants is for us to keep our hopes alive, to be farsighted and to opt already now for the Kingdom of Heaven.

**Only in the eschatological dimension will it be possible to discern who is definitely good and who is not. For the time being, he who is not good enough can always be changed. In the end it is possible that the one we considered worse than ourselves, be evaluated as good; and that those of us who thought to be so good, who knows whether our goodness will exceed the rigorous examination we will have to go through!**

**In any case, the parable makes it clear that in this life we are no one to do neither discernment nor selection. It is none of our business. We have to wait for the end of the world which is when the Master will make the final choice.**

**Toward the end, Jesus poses the question that every good teacher asks his students: "Have you understood all these things?" (Mt 13:51). We, His disciples, what shall we answer him?**