

are filled with a great sense of excitement and joy. Notice, that simply discovering the Kingdom is satisfying in itself; we don't need to do anything with it. Notice also, two recurrent features in these two parables: for a labourer to become a land-owner or for a pearl merchant to sell his whole stock, involves a total change of life; in the same way, discovering God's Kingdom must change our lives. But the main feature of the parable is joy - an overwhelming joy at discovering this wonderful treasure.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings which we bring from the abundance of your gifts, that through the powerful working of your grace these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our present way of life and lead us to eternal gladness.

Communion Antiphon

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.

Prayer after Communion

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation.

Communion Reflection

“How lovely it was, that first kiss of Jesus in my heart -- it was truly a kiss of love. I knew that I was loved and said, 'I love You, and I give myself to You forever.' Jesus asked for nothing, He claimed no sacrifice. Long before that, He and little Thérèse had seen and understood one another well, but on that day it was more than a meeting -- it was a complete fusion. We were no longer two, for Thérèse had disappeared like a drop of water lost in the mighty ocean. Jesus alone remained – the Master and the King.”

(St Therese of Lisieux ~ Recalling her First Communion)

Seventeenth Sunday

Year A

26th July 2026

Acquiring the Only Worthwhile Treasure

Today we come to the end of chapter 13 in Matthew's Gospel which we have been following for the past three Sundays. Jesus has been teaching in parables, revealing the Kingdom of God. Why in parables, why not in plain language? Because parables, using every day experiences, confront & challenge us. Unconsciously, we bare the very depths of our hearts, revealing who we are & how we feel about things. Parables help us to see the world through the eyes of Jesus. Today we hear that finding the Kingdom is like discovering hidden treasure.

Entrance Antiphon

God is in his holy place, God who unites those who dwell in his house; he himself gives might and strength to his people.

Collect

O God, protector of those who hope in you, without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy, bestow in abundance your mercy upon us and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass in such a way as to hold fast even now to those that ever endure.

1 KINGS 3: 5, 7-11

The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, 'Ask what I shall give you.' And Solomon said, 'O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant, therefore, an

understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?’

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life, or riches, or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.’

THE WORD OF THE LORD

We dip into 1 Kings which, together with Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel & 2 Kings, are historical books telling of the history of Israel beginning with the reign of David's Son, King Solomon (BC 970) to the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 by the Babylonians. Although much of the material is of ancient origin, it wasn't composed until after the event, completed around 538 - the return from exile. It must be said that Israel's kings do not come out in a good light, but we begin on a bright note, the prayer of Solomon. The Lord has asked him what he would like and Solomon replies: “Give me an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong.” Solomon is very much presented as the ideal king reflecting the heart of God. For an attentive, wise heart is only acquired through meditating on God's law; such a person would be able to judge and act with security and confidence, according to God's truth. This theme is reflected in our psalm.

PSALM: 119(118):57, 72. 76-77. 127-128. 129-130

Response: *O LORD, how I love your law!*

You, O LORD, are my portion; I have promised to obey your words. The law from your mouth means more to me than large quantities of silver and gold.

Let your merciful love console me by your promise to your servant. Show me compassion, that I may live, for your law is my delight.

That is why I love your commands more than finest gold, why I rule my life by your precepts, and hate false ways.

Your decrees are wonderful indeed; therefore my soul obeys them. The unfolding of your word gives light, and understanding to the simple.

ROMANS 8: 28-30

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

We continue reading Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter Eight. Last week we heard how the Spirit intercedes and strengthens our weakness and this theme of God's love and faithfulness continues with the promise that as God has begun the good work in us, we can be confident that he will bring it to completion. We have been chosen in Christ and God has ordained that we be conformed to his image. As Christ was raised to life, so shall we.

Alleluia, alleluia! I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children. Alleluia!

MATTHEW 13: 44-46 (shortened version)

Jesus said to the crowd: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.’

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

How well Jesus plays on our human emotions, when he says that discovering the Kingdom of heaven is like someone discovering buried treasure. We have all had the experience of unexpectedly finding money or something of value – our hearts pound, our minds become focused and we