

Discovery of the Treasure of God’s Kingdom and Selling off Everything to buy it – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A July 26th 2020. (1Kings 3:5,7-12, Romans 8:28-30, Matthew 13:44-52)

Dear Friends in Christ, long time ago before I became a priest, I was walking past a field in which I saw people walking around with their heads bowed down. All of them were obviously searching for something in the field. I asked what this could mean, and I was told the key of a new car had been thrown into the field and the one who found it became the keeper of the car. It was a kind of yearly contest. For these people at that moment the most precious treasure was the car and not an inch of the park was left unattended.

I can still imagine the joy of the one who finally found the key. That is the same with the euphoria of discovering the treasure of God’s Kingdom and selling everything to buy it. The readings for this 17th Sunday in ordinary time tell us that the Kingdom of God is the greatest treasure we can ever find. We are therefore encouraged to pray for wisdom like Solomon did to enable us to discover the real value of God’s Kingdom. Wisdom is given to whoever seeks it because God has made wisdom available.

We have a famous text from 1Kings as our first reading where Solomon asks God for wisdom. King Solomon is at the crucial beginnings of his kingship and he goes to Gibeon to pray to God. The Lord appeared to Solomon and poses this question to him, “Ask me, what would you like me to give you?” God offers to give anything to Solomon to help secure his rule. Imagine in this time of economic crisis and you are hearing such a request. Many of us would obviously ask for some sort of monies or material riches. But Solomon asked for wisdom.

In our gospel reading today, Jesus again gives us parables to teach us about this greatest treasure which is the Kingdom of God. Jesus says, “the Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy he goes to sell all that he has and buys that field.” In the second parable, a merchant finally finds the pearl of great value he has been searching for over many years and he too goes to sell all that he has to buy it. Both of them are surprised by joy, the joy of finding Jesus or the joy of discovering once again that Jesus has found us. The joy of discovery made the men in each of the parables willing to give up everything to get the treasure or the pearl.

In the ancient times, there were no banks, so people used the ground as the place to keep their most cherished belongings safe and safe from war. For example, the worthless servant who hid his talent in the ground was keeping it safe till his master came back. (Matthew 25:25). Again, in the ancient times, the pearl was the loveliest of all possessions, so it means to discover the Kingdom is to discover the loveliest thing in the world. And to accept and be in the Kingdom of Heaven is to do the will of God. It is worth any sacrifice to enter the Kingdom. To accept it may require you to let go certain things, like giving up certain ambitions, to abandon some habits, addictions or ways of life that are not easy to stop, or we may have to lose certain things. Thus, everything has to be sold to gain this one precious thing, the Kingdom.

For King Solomon, the greatest treasure was wisdom to enable him to govern his people well. For us, the treasure is the Kingdom of God. Whoever discovers it is determined to change their whole life to have it. St. Paul in our 2nd reading says God has predestined everything to work together for the good of those who love him, that is those who seek to find the treasure of the Kingdom. Like the farmer we may discover the treasure by chance while going about our daily business or

like the merchant we may discover the precious pearl at the end of a vigorous search. (Examples: St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Augustine). Whether we found Jesus by chance or found him after vigorously searching, we must be ready to sell all to possess him. May God help us to give up certain things in order to accept the precious treasure of the Kingdom. **Amen.**

By Fr. Emmanuel Subaar