

## **SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

In this Sunday's gospel from St. Matthew (Matt 13:44-52), he once again uses the parables of Jesus concerning the finding of treasure and a pearl of great price. These parables are about searching and finding the treasure which is beyond all value: God himself.

In the early 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, St Lawrence who was a deacon and later a martyr of the Church, was issued with a letter from the civic authorities of Rome demanding that he gather together all the treasures of the Church, and the soldiers would come and take them to Rome. But Lawrence had interpreted the edict differently. He, gathered near his house, all the poor, sick, lame, widows and orphans. When the civil authorities arrived they demanded the 'treasures' of the Church. Lawrence replied by saying that these people were the treasures of the Church.

While the authorities were not pleased with Lawrence's take on the 'treasures' of the Church, Jesus would have been very happy with the people who are mostly ignored and outcast by others. For Jesus, the poor and marginalised take front and centre in the Kingdom of God.

When Jesus uses the words 'pearl of great price' and 'the treasure hidden in a field' in his parable they are designed to get people's attention. But, Jesus is pointing to something greater than earthly treasure, because he's talking about gaining the Kingdom of God in hearts.

In the first reading today from the first Book of Kings (Kgs 3:5, 7-12), King Solomon who has succeeded his father King David, is asked by God in a dream what he most desires as the new King of Israel. Instead of asking for more wealth, larger armies or more land, Solomon recognises he is a young man, unskilled in leadership of such a great people as the nation of Israel. So, Solomon asks for the gift of wisdom. A few weeks ago I shared with you the reflection of Rabbi Harold Kushner, who, in his book: 'Whenever all you've wanted was never enough,' tells how when he was a young Rabbi he admired people who were intelligent, but now in his senior years, he admires people who are wise.

In order to have the 'pearl' or 'treasure' which is the Kingdom of God, faith in Jesus as the Son of God, we have to go and sell everything we own, in order to possess the greatest treasure of all. In realising that faith is our greatest

**treasure, then we have to renounce other areas of our life to make our greatest commitment to our greatest treasure.**

**We can all receive this treasure, and God is offering it to us freely and without condition, but, we must give up all else which we think of as treasure, and accept that faith in God and his desire that we be saved is the only treasure that matters.**

**We can only discover that treasure in our pilgrimage together as we gain the wisdom and faith which are necessary in order to take the steps of renunciation which allows us to receive the gift of faith.**

**St Lawrence understood the treasure that Jesus speaks of in the gospel today, because it is not in possessions where our treasure lies, but in our care for the most neglected that we find the treasure of greatest price: God.**

**[Fr Kelvin](#)**