

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

He sells everything he owns and buys the field.

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well, then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

30 JULY 2023

FINDING OUR TREASURE

As a young king, Solomon knew that he had much to learn to be the ruler the people of Israel needed him to be. When God invited him to ask for whatever he needed he asked for the gift of discernment between good and evil. Wealth might come and go, but the treasure he needed most of all was the gift of wisdom.

Matthew concludes the parabolic discourse with four parables that emphasise the wisdom that is required to not only recognise what is of lasting value but to hold on to it when we find it. It can be that what is of value is often hidden like the treasure in the field, or needs to be discovered like the pearl, or sorted like the catch that the dragnet brings in. While Jesus spoke of the treasure of the kingdom of God, Matthew has come to see that the pearl of great price is Jesus himself who is the source of our hope and the wisdom we need to live life to the full.

Throughout the eighth chapter of the letter to the Romans, Paul encourages his readers to take heart during the struggles and difficulties that they face as Christians. Our faith itself is a pearl of great price, a gift and treasure that gives us the strength to deal with the struggles and complexities of our lives. God can transform even the darkest moments and our faith helps us to live with hope in the future glory God has prepared for us.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

A reading from the first book of the Kings

You have asked for wisdom.

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its numbers cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this', the Lord said, 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM Ps 118:57, 72, 76-77, 127-130. R. v. 97

R. Lord, I love your commands.

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord, / is to obey your word. / The law from your mouth means more to me / than silver and gold. **R.**
2. Let your love be ready to console me / by your promise to your servant. / Let your love come to me and I shall live / for your law is my delight. **R.**
3. That is why I love your commands / more than finest gold. / That is why I rule my life by your precepts: / I hate false ways. **R.**
4. Your will is wonderful indeed; / therefore I obey it. / The unfolding of your word gives light / and teaches the simple. **R.**



SECOND READING

Rom 8:28-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

He predestined us to become true images of his Son.

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia! / Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, / you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. / Alleluia!