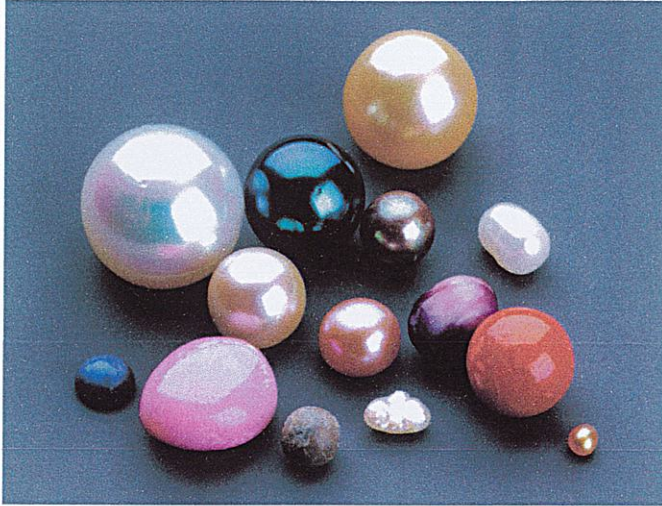


Our Faith on Sunday

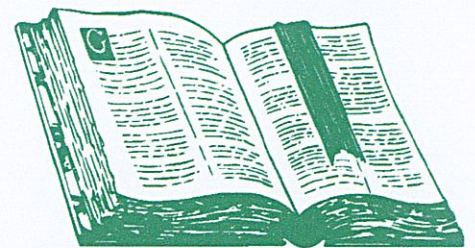
GOSPEL REFLECTION



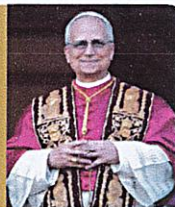
Picture the crowd listening to Jesus as he speaks to them about the kingdom of heaven, using examples such as the treasure hidden in the field, the precious pearl, a net filled with fish. Today we are faced with the same challenge of trying to understand what is this kingdom of heaven that Jesus is talking about.

If it is a “heavenly” kingdom, does it have anything to do with this earth, with you and I trying to pay our bills, going for a walk, cooking a meal, putting up with an irritating work colleague? One clue to answering this question is given to us by Jesus himself when he says to Pilate: “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18:36). However, as always with Jesus, we cannot take just one sentence and use it to prove a point. Jesus also said to his disciples, “love one another” (Jn 13:34). And to show that he was talking about actions to be carried out in this world, he washed their feet and told them to do the

same with one another. In actual fact Christians are called to be in the world but not of the world. It is a delicate balance. In the early Church the desert ascetics gave a heroic witness to what St. Paul wrote to the Romans: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world” (Rom. 12:2). Times have changed and while the monastic way of life is still a gift for the Church today, more than ever it seems necessary for Christians to be in the world while aiming for its transformation through our love for one another.



POPE LEO XIV THE HOLY SEE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATIONS



CHAPTER I A FEW ESSENTIAL WORDS

4. Jesus' disciples criticized the woman who poured costly perfumed oil on his head. They said: “Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.” However, the Lord said to them in response: “You always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me” (Mt 26:8-9,11). That woman saw in Jesus the lowly and suffering Messiah on whom she could pour out all her love. What comfort that anointing must have brought to the very head that within a few days would be pierced by thorns! It was a small gesture, of course, but those who suffer know how great even a small gesture of affection can be, and how much relief it can bring. Jesus understood this and told the disciples that the memory of her gesture would endure: “Wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” (Mt 26:13). The simplicity of that woman's gesture speaks volumes. No sign of affection, even the smallest, will ever be forgotten, especially if it is shown to those who are suffering, lonely or in need, as was the Lord at that time.

Pope Francis Angelus 30 July 2023

Realizing [the] immense value [of the precious pearl, the merchant] sells everything, he sacrifices all his goods just to have it. He radically changes the inventory of his warehouse; there is no longer anything other than that pearl: it is his only wealth, the meaning of his present and his future. This too is an invitation for us. But what is this pearl for which one can renounce everything, the one of which the Lord speaks to us? This pearl is Him: it is the Lord! Seeking the Lord and finding the Lord, encountering the Lord, living with the Lord. The pearl is Jesus: He is the precious pearl of life, to be sought, found and made one's own. It is worth investing everything in him because, when one encounters Christ, life changes. If you meet Christ, your life changes... Do I know how to spend myself for Jesus? Is he in first place for me, is he the greatest good in life? It would be nice to say to him today: “Jesus, You are my greatest good”. Each one of you in your heart, say now: “Jesus, you are my greatest good”.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf. Ps 67: 6-7, 36

**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.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the

Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the First Book of Kings. 1 Kings 3:5-6a, 7-12

In those days: 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.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 119(118):57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130, R.97a

R. 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.

R.

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.

SECOND READING

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Romans 8:28-30

Brothers and sisters: 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.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Alleluia, alleluia.

Cf. Matthew 11:25

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

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:44-46

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: 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.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

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.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Ps 102: 2

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

R.

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.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.