

July 30, 2017

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

God himself is our treasure!

1Kings 3:5, 7-12

Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-130

Romans 8:28-30

Matthew 13:44-52

In the first reading God appears to Solomon in a dream and says, "Ask and I will give it to you." Solomon asks wisely: an understanding heart to judge the people wisely and to distinguish right from wrong. The Lord is pleased with his request and Solomon is given unsurpassed wisdom to rule the kingdom of Israel.

The Psalmist praises the Lord's guidance which he describes as more precious than even thousands of gold and silver pieces. God's law is his delight since it gives him life, light, and understanding which helps him identify false ways that he strongly rejects.

In the second reading Paul explains that all things work together for the good of all the faithful who are called to accomplish God's purpose. In this way they are to share the image of the Son, the first born among all the brothers and sisters; those who are predestined are called, justified, and will even be glorified.

In the Gospel Jesus continues to teach in parables emphasizing that the Reign of God is to be compared to our recognizing and seeking the most precious values. In the end the precious and the worthless will be harvested together and the angels will separate the good from the wicked and discard the latter.

The Father is the Source of Wisdom
The Son is Wisdom personified,
The Holy Spirit offers us the gift of Wisdom.

What do our dreams long for? Would we prefer an understanding heart to wealth? The ability to clearly distinguish right from wrong to long life? Solomon's choices clearly pleased God and the king was then gifted in many ways. The psalmist echoes these choices identifying the Lord's ways as wonderful revelations bringing him light and teaching him to avoid false ways. Paul notes that God makes all things work together for the greater good and results are surprising as well as mysterious. Jesus makes it clear that once we identify what is precious we are to seek it wholeheartedly.

Finding something of great value is usually unexpected and most likely will cause all present priorities to come to a halt and a new direction mapped out. Such a discovery can be accidental through hard work, as for example when the man is plowing the field or an act of revelation in recognizing the value of something we glossed over on different occasions. The "great value" can be something recognized as "old" and solid or something subtle, creative, and "new"; in either case Jesus recognizes the scribe who is instructed in the kingdom of heaven as the head of the household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old, and just as Solomon used the "wisdom" he received in a dream to build up the kingdom of Israel so we too must be ready to use both to build up the kingdom of heaven.

