Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:44-52): Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

"Do you understand all these things?" They answered, "Yes." And he replied, "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old."

"A treasure buried in a field; a merchant searching for fine pearls"

Fr. Enric PRAT i Jordana
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Today, the Gospel wants to help us look within ourselves, to find something hidden: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field" (Mt 13:44). When we speak of treasure, we refer to something of exceptional value, not to things or situations that, although loved, are still fleeting and cheap, like temporary pleasures: those things that so many people exhaust themselves searching for outside, but leave them feeling empty and unsatisfied once found and experienced.

The treasure that Jesus proposes is buried deep within our soul, at the very core of our being. It is the Kingdom of God. It consists in lovingly encountering, in a mysterious way, the Source of life, beauty, truth, and goodness, and remaining united to this same Source until, having fulfilled the time of our pilgrimage, and free from all useless trinkets, the Kingdom of Heaven that we have sought in our hearts and have cultivated in faith and love, opens like a flower and reveals the shine of the hidden treasure.

Some, like Saint Paul or the good thief himself, have suddenly come across the Kingdom of God in an

unexpected way, because the Lord's ways are infinite. Ordinarily, however, for one to discover the treasure, it must be intentionally sought: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls” (Mt 13:45). Perhaps this treasure is only found by those who are not easily satisfied, by those who are not content with little, by the idealists, by the adventurers.

In our temporal order, we say that the restless and nonconformists are ambitious people; but in the world of the spirit, they are the saints. They are willing to sell everything to buy the field. As Saint John of the Cross says: “To come to possess everything seek to possess nothing. To come to be everything seek to be nothing.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “My little children, reflect on these words: the Christian’s treasure is not on earth but in heaven. Our thoughts, then ought to be directed to where our treasure is” (St. John Mary Vianney)

- “The person of Jesus is the hidden treasure; he is the pearl of great value. He is the fundamental discovery who can make a decisive change in our lives, filling it with meaning” (Francis)

- “... The faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the apostles. Faith is a treasure of life which is enriched by being shared” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N. 949)