

Sunday 17th (A) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 13,44-52): Jesus said to the crowds: «The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. The one who finds it buries it again; and so happy is he, that he goes and sells everything he has, in order to buy that field.

»Again the kingdom of heaven is like a trader who is looking for fine pearls. Once he has found a pearl of exceptional quality, he goes away, sells everything he has and buys it.

»Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a big fishing net let down into the sea, in which every kind of fish has been caught. When the net is full, it is dragged ashore. Then they sit down and gather the good fish in buckets, but throw the worthless ones away. That is how it will be at the end of time; the angels will go out to separate the wicked from the just and throw them into the blazing furnace, where they will weep and gnash their teeth».

Jesus asked, «Have you understood all these things?» «Yes», they answered. So he said to them, «You will see that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom is like a householder who can produce from his store things both new and old».

«A treasure hidden in a field; a trader who is looking for fine pearls»

Fr. Enric PRAT i Jordana
(Sort, Lleida, Spain)

Today, our Gospel is helping us to look inside us, to find something hidden in there:

«The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field» (Mt 13:44). When we speak of a treasure we are always referring to something of exceptional value, of extreme importance, not to things or situations that, even though valuable for us are, nonetheless, nothing but futile and worthless refuse, for this is what temporal satisfactions and pleasures actually are: what so many people are striving to find outside, to end up totally thwarted, once experienced.

The treasure Jesus announces here is flowing in the midst of our soul, in the very nucleus of our being. It is the Kingdom of Heaven. It consists in lovingly finding, in a mysterious way, the Source of life, of all beauty, truth and goodness, and to remain united to the same Source until, our pilgrimage over and free of all useless trinkets, the Kingdom of Heaven we have been looking for in our heart and have fostered with faith and love, blossoms forth like the glowing flower that lets its hidden treasure appear in all its splendor.

Some, as St. Paul and the same good thief, unexpectedly run into the Kingdom of Heaven, without any previous thought, because God's ways are infinite, but, normally, to discover this treasure, we have to purposely look for it: «Again the kingdom of heaven is like a trader who is looking for fine pearls» (Mt 13:45). Maybe this treasure is only to be found by those difficult to be satisfied, or who do not make do with what they got, i.e. by idealists and adventurers.

In our temporal order, we tend to qualify the eager and unconformists as ambitious persons, but in the spiritual world, they are the saints. They are those willing to sell everything to buy the field, as St. John of the Cross points out when he says: «That you may possess all things, seek to possess nothing. That you may be everything, seek to be nothing».