

Wednesday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 13,44-46): 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«.

«He goes and sells everything he has, in order to buy that field»

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Today, Matthew places two parables about the Kingdom of Heaven for us to ponder over. The announcement of the Kingdom is of essence in Jesus' preaching and in the hopes of the chosen people. But it is evident the nature of this Kingdom is not understood by the majority. The Sanhedrin who condemned him to death did not understand it, nor did Pontius Pilate or Herod, and initially, not even his disciples understood it. We can find only in the good thief, hung in a cross along with him, the comprehension Jesus requests when he says: «Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom» (Lk 23:42). Both had been accused as criminals and were about to die; but, because of an unknown reason, the good thief recognizes Jesus as the King of a Kingdom that will come after that terrible death. It could only be a spiritual Kingdom.

In his first preaching, Jesus speaks of the Kingdom as of a hidden treasure, the finding of which causes the finder a great joy and impels him to buy the field to be able to enjoy it forever: «and so happy is he, that he goes and sells everything he has, in order to buy that field» (Mt 13:44). But, at the same time, to reach the Kingdom it is necessary to look for it with yearning and effort, to the point of selling all one may have: «Once he has found one of exceptional quality, he goes away, sells everything he has and buys it» (Mt 13:46). «What is He referring to

when He says seek and he who seeks, finds? I daresay He is referring to the pearls and to the pearl, pearl that acquires he who has given up everything and has accepted to lose everything» (Origen).

The Kingdom is peace, justice and liberty. To reach It is, at the same time, a gift from God and a human responsibility. In front of the greatness of this divine gift we realize the imperfection and instability of our own efforts, quite often destroyed by our sins, our wars and our malice that looks insurmountable. Nevertheless, we must have confidence, because what looks impossible for man is more than possible for God.