Wednesday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mt* 13:44-46): 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."

"Out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

Fr. Enric CASES i Martín
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, Matthew presents two parables about the Kingdom of Heaven for us to ponder. The announcement of the Kingdom is essential to Jesus' preaching and central to 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. Only in the good thief, crucified alongside Him, do we find the understanding Jesus desires, expressed in his words: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk 23:42). Both had been accused as criminals and were about to die; but, for some 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 a hidden treasure ¬—the discovery of which brings great joy and compels him to buy the field so that he may enjoy it forever: "Out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys 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: "When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that 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, love, justice and liberty. Reaching it is both 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.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “In this holy Catholic Church, formed by its teaching and living as we ought, we shall possess the kingdom of heaven and inherit eternal life. For the sake of this we endure everything, that we may gain that life from the Lord.” (Saint Cyril of Jerusalem)

- “This Kingdom is worth giving everything for. It is the treasure buried in the field: the finder of the treasure buries it again and sells everything in order to buy the field, so to gain possession of the treasure.” (Benedict XVI)

- “(...) This treasure [the Good News], received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer.” (Catechism Of the Catholic Church, № 3)