August 23rd: Memorial of Saint Rose of Lima, Patroness of the Americas and Philippines)

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 sells everything he has, in order to buy that field»

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we are filled with joy celebrating the first saint (and patron saint) of the American Continent, Saint Rose of Lima (1585-1617). She found the "treasure" (cf. Mt 13,44) and found it because she prayed. Jesus Christ, our "treasure", is easily found, but we must look for him. Indeed, one day while praying before a Virgin Mary's image, she felt that Jesus said to her: "Rose, dedicate all your love to me." She was willing to "sell" everything she had (cf. Mt 13,46), in order to belong totally to God…

But the "sell" was not easy. She wanted to, but her environment — starting with her own family — was opposed or, at least, was not making things easy. An effort is always needed; We must hold on to the Cross of Christ! Rose had so well learned the lesson that, as she wrote, she would have wanted to «place in the middle of a street, so that I might say in a loud voice to people: 'Hear, O people; hear, O nations. We cannot obtain grace unless we suffer afflictions. We must heap trouble upon trouble to attain a deep anticipation in the divine nature».

She would have preferred to enter a convent: this would have been the simplest solution, given the permanent opposition of her familiar environment. But God implied that He expected her to remain with her family. For this reason, St. Rose was linked to the Third Order of St. Dominic, taking Saint Catherine of Siena as a role model. And there, in her family home, she gave herself virginally to the Lord, working in the garden of the house and sewing. She experienced the happiness of the troth with Jesus and, thus, was able to live with joy the demands - in his case, the thorns - of family and social life: «If only mortals would learn how great it is to possess divine grace, how beautiful, how noble. No one would complain about his cross or about troubles that may happen to him» (St. Rose of Lima).