

Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

Scripture Focus

The Gospel today speaks of true wisdom, a priceless treasure to be sought with all one's heart. In the first comparison Jesus uses, a man discovers a treasure that was so valuable that he "sold all he had and bought the field." In the second comparison a pearl merchant discovers a pearl worth more than all his other possessions. Common to both stories is the marvel of discovering such a prize and giving everything to gain possession of it. The point of both parables is that gaining the treasure of God's saving love is worth any sacrifice.

Life Focus

1. Describe a time when a decision you made seemed right or wise. Name a time when a decision you made seemed to be wrong or unwise. What made the difference in these decisions?
2. Relate an experience when you were able to uncover a "hidden treasure." What helped you to see its value?
3. What in your life now is most valuable to you? How do you find God present in that value?
4. What are you willing to "pay" or "give up" in order to possess what is valuable to you?
5. What about you could be described as being like the "pearl of great price"? What are the gifts that are uncovered by being related to each other as members of the same community?

1 ½ - Two Hour Format for small Church Community Meeting

Gathering (A few minutes are spent settling down)

1. Faith Sharing in Small Groups

Read the gospel of next Sunday out loud. Then take some time to read and reflect on Scripture Focus and Life Focus questions.

Count off for people to form groups of three (four at the most) to share on the Life Focus questions. (20 minutes)

2. Faith Sharing with the Whole Group

Reread the gospel passage out loud.

Then entire group focuses attention on answering the following questions: (Remember to honor and respect the confidential nature of the previous faith sharing.)

From your faith sharing in the smaller groups, what touched, encouraged or motivated you?

How might it affect your attitude or actions at home, at work, or in the larger community?

How about your small church community –how might all of you together respond to the gospel's challenge? (20 minutes)

3. Shared Prayer

Reread the gospel passage out loud a third time.

Then stand in a circle and take a few turns praying spontaneously together as the Spirit moves the group (prayers of petition, thanksgiving, praise, whatever). This is the time to hear the particular needs of the members and to pray for them.

Refreshments