

Seventeenth Sunday of the Year 2020

The Rectory, St Ignatius of Loyola RC Church, Green Street, Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex TW16 6QB

01932 783507

sunburyonthames@rcdow.org.uk

26th July 2020

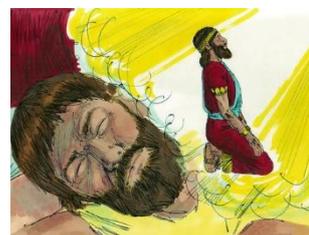


Dear Friends,

Once more we greet you with our love, concern, care and prayer. You remain at the centre of our lives, because it is for each one of you we are here in our spiritual home, the Church of St Ignatius.

Some things, some events, some periods of isolation, no matter the reason, can break down the community. Our hope, our prayer is that because we have each focused on praying alone, we will be stronger, we will be renewed, when we come together again.

In the first Reading from the Book of Kings (1 Kings 3: 5, 7 - 12) Solomon is asleep and dreaming; in his dream, God appears to him and says, “ask what you would like me to give you.” Solomon tells God that he is only a young man, who feels very unskilled to lead God’s chosen people, who are many in number. So he asked God for “a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil so that he can lead God’s chosen people, who are many in number. “God replies, “Here and now I do as you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.”



[Readings for the Seventeenth Sunday of the Year 2020](#)



In Saint Matthew’s Gospel (13:44 - 52) we hear Jesus speaking in three short parables. Once the parables are told, Jesus asked the people who had gathered “have you understood all this? “The crowd reply, “Yes“. Jesus goes on to say that everyone who is a disciple of God is like a householder who brings out from the store room things both old and new. Using their gifts wisely will lead them to Heaven.

But, that is the end of the Gospel; what of the three parables? Jesus had been asked to tell the crowd about the Kingdom of Heaven. How can He describe God’s Kingdom? In parables ...some of which are only a sentence long. “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; they hide it again, go off happy, sell everything they own, and buy the field.” The man cannot buy the treasure alone; he has to buy the whole field in order to obtain his hearts desire. So, his “treasure “may be small in size but now he must hold onto it whilst he prepares the ground to make it yield. It

would be easy to forget the treasure as the rest of the field is so demanding of time and energy. Surely this describes each one of us? We find our "Treasure" Jesus; and we promise to remain close to Him in prayer, and through the support of the parish to which we belong. But, all too easily things go wrong and our treasure is set to one side. "My child plays football on a Sunday morning so we can't come to Mass. "N.B. You could come to Mass on a Saturday evening or later on a Sunday morning.

"I'm going to take some time to pray after I have finished the chores." But as we all know, the chores take forever and the time of prayer is squeezed out. Gradually, gradually our lives could become like a bare field holding no treasure.



In the second parable Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as being like "a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he sells everything he owns in order to buy that one pearl. A person comes to faith in God, promises to remain faithful and gives their life to bring about the kingdom of God here on earth. But people get jealous of a confident faith; they want it whilst at the same time not wanting it. They are confused, jealous, unable to respond to God's invitation to come to faith in him. So, they silence the voice. They condemn

the person. Isn't this the story of the Saints and more particularly the Martyrs?

And the third parable of Jesus... "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in baskets and throw away those that are of no use this is how it will be at the end of time; the good and the bad will be separated; the bad will be lost forever. "



Sr Liza remembers ...

In Selsey in the late '50s and early '60s, my family used to stay in a house overlooking the beach and the sea. We would sometimes see the fishermen going out very early in their little rowing boats with a large net that they would drop into the sea. As they moved through the waters, the net picked up all sorts. The most important part of all this was to see them return and drag their boats and nets up onto the shore. There, they would sort their lot... Fish of no use were often thrown back into the sea to become food for the hungry seagulls. After a while, they had only the good fish on the beach - A haul of mackerel. They put to one side the fish that they wanted. Then people went to choose and buy their fish. To us, as children, it seemed like a great adventure. We didn't have any concept of the hard work, of the dangerous water, or of the fact that they were trying to earn a living. Their dragnets were fascinating.

Fr Michael writes ...

My experience of a 'dragnet' was some 20 years ago. I was staying on a very simple French campsite. Everyone knew everyone. We all returned year after year.

A French man called Guy (pronounced 'Gee') invited me to go with him when he next took his dragnet to the sea. It was to be very early in the morning before the sun was on the waters. I thought I was going to watch - I was wrong!

Guy handed me one end of the net, when we reached the water we separated, so that the net was taut between us. We waded out, Guy knowing exactly where the fish would be. We turned and lowered the net, literally dragging it through the waters, as we approached the shore we came towards each other in order to



close off the net. Our haul was largely whitebait, exactly what Guy wanted. Hundreds of tiny fish! Plus, of course, a few odds and ends that would be no good to anyone. Guy took the fish to his wife who had the lovely tradition of cooking the whitebait very simply in flour, garlic and parsley. Then she would tip them into children's buckets and leave one at each door whether it be caravan, tent or van. They were delicious! A lot of work for both Guy and Suzette (& me!) but what a feast. I remember my arms aching from pulling in the net.

When Jesus asks "Have you understood all this?" "The people replied, "Yes" to God. But, saying "yes" to God, means that you have to accept that your life may well be changed radically. Being where He wants you to be, doing what He wants you to do, bringing His gifts of consolation, care, love, mercy and forgiveness, to all whose lives you touch. Yes, three very simple parables, but when you really try to understand them they mean so much more and they demand so much more from each one of us.

Sister Liza writes:

The story of Solomon's encounter with God, and his opportunity to ask for what ever he wanted from God, made me stop and think. Two strands of thought came to me.

I really like nice pens, attractive paperclips, pretty bulldog clips etc they "say" so much more than utilitarian black ones could ever do! Shortly before I read the story of Solomon a parishioner had given me a large, bright green paperclip. David had written, "this paperclip is magical to those who want it to be. "His love of paperclips stems from the shape. For David they represent "Wisdom. The beginning and the end entwined as one; with the journey happening in between the two ends."



I found myself wondering... If this paperclip is magical, what will my wish be?...

I re-read Solomon's dream and again found myself wondering what my wish would've been?... I am sure that, if we could gather our wishes

together, they would each be very different...

"Can I win the lottery? "

"Can we move to a new house, more suitable for our needs?"

"Can I have a salary increase? "

My wish will tell you much about me: "I wish I could have a healthy, mobile body as in days gone by". That sounded so selfish until I ask myself "Why? "Because of the freedom and strength to hold a newborn baby. Because going out would not be such a palaver. Because I could sit at the children's level in the Manning Room, and in the pews with everyone for Mass.

In other words, I wished for a healthy body so that I could fulfil my ministry as a Parish Sister more easily.

With a wish you always express a dissatisfaction.

Ask yourself: "what would my wish be...?" and, "Why would I ask for this?"



The man in the Gospel had to buy the whole field in order to attain the treasure. The field is our journey through life... The Pearl is formed around a time of suffering; a suffering made whole by the resurrection of Jesus. The wish for treasure is our hope to DO better, and to BE better people.

The Scriptures are a treasure, they are an adventure, they lead us to know God and ultimately will lead us safely to the kingdom of heaven.

The pearl, the field, the dragnet; three wonderful images of how God calls us to himself. By the way what happened when God pulled you out of the dragnet?...

Do take time to have a look at the story of Solomon's dream in the Scriptures. Do take time to read the three parables and to let God speak to your heart...

We may try to put God on one side; but God never pushes us away from himself or discards us: no one is lost to Him. God never takes His eyes off you; He gazes on you with pure love.

Enjoy your week ... Enjoy your week with God ...

Fr. Michael

St. Kip

PS If you have children, let them find these stories in their Bibles and read them to you. Then talk to them about what the stories mean.

Remember, there is loads on the web to help you to raise your children in the faith.