

FROM THE PASTOR'S



Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 27, 2008 A

WHAT WOULD YOU ASK? AND WHAT IS YOUR PEARL OF GREAT PRICE TAKING MOM AND DAD HOME

In our first reading today, God says to King Solomon: “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.” How nice of God to make that offer to Solomon—especially when we keep in mind that he was a wealthy man.

Being a young inexperienced king, Solomon asked for an “understanding heart with which he could judge wisely—judge between right and wrong.” That was a very good answer for a man in his position. God was very pleased with Solomon’s answer.

Reflection answer: If God said to you: “ask something of me and I will give it to you”, what would you ask for?

“All things work for the good . . .”

Our second reading today begins with a very well-known scripture of Paul’s: “*We know that all things work for those who love God. . .*” Roms 8:28. Those words of Paul can be both *challenging* and *comforting*.

Challenging: When bad things are happening to us, we can easily wonder how can this bad experience be for my good. An important belief of Christians is that God does not cause bad things. Rather, he permits them and then works with us to draw good out of the bad. For example, in the Bible when Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery, they intended evil for him whom their father seemed to favor. Years later during a big famine, the brothers came to Egypt looking for food—they were feeling very bad for the evil they had done to their brother. Joseph said to them: “*It was not you who sent me here but God. . . You meant evil for me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many could be saved*” (i.e. a reference to how Joseph was able to feed many starving people in a time of famine) Gen 45. Joseph’s *faith perspective* enabled him to see God bringing good out of evil. That same perspective can help us to do the same. Sometimes this is easy enough. Sometimes it is very difficult.

Comforting—for the very faith-filled person, the above verse can be very comforting as we struggle to see God’s hand in the painful and difficult experiences of

life. As we grow in faith we will be able to embrace the wisdom found in the following poem.

The Weaver

*My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me.
I cannot choose the colors
He worketh steadily.
Offtimes He weaveth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper, and I, the underside.
Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why
The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver’s skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.*

(Author Unknown)

The ‘Weaver’ is a poetic way of stating Roms 5:28 quoted above.

What is your pearl of great price?

One husband nicknamed his wife “pearl” because he saw her as his pearl of great price. Jesus tried to help his listeners to see that belonging to his kingdom would be the ‘pearl of great price’ that they should seek to have. Jesus’ kingdom was not a territorial one. Rather it was a spiritual reality that exists whenever men and women embrace Jesus and his vision of life. The Preface we say on the Feast of Christ the King tells us that Christ’s kingdom is one of “*truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, peace and love.*”

So what is your “pearl of great price?” To what have you given your total commitment? Our pearl of great price may be very clear to us or it may still be buried in our hearts. Our reluctance to give our total commitment to anyone or thing may still be a reality for us.

Some year ago, Fr. Arrupe the late Superior General of the Jesuits, wrote these beautiful words:

Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

So this week ponder the thought provoking question: What is your pearl of great price?

The house of light

Reflecting on today's parables of the buried treasure, the pearls and the dragnet, Jay Cormier tells this story.

A boy lived with his parents in a cottage on a hillside, overlooking a beautiful valley. One of his greatest joys was to sit on the doorstep on summer evenings and gaze across the valley to a house miles away on the opposite side. Just as the sun would set, the windows of that house seemed to burst into flame, shining in dazzling golden light. What an incredible place that must be, the boy thought; how happy the people must be who are lucky enough to live there.

One day the boy decided to find the house with the windows of fire. He packed a sandwich and a container of water and set out. The house was farther away than he thought, and it was already near sunset when he climbed the steep hill. When he came to the house, he was disappointed to find that it was a plain cottage with ordinary windows. The people who lived there were very kind and welcomed the little traveler. They offered him supper. As it was already dark, they made us a small bed for him in the kitchen.

One of the children in the family was a girl who was the same age as the boy. The two talked about their homes and friends and life on their sides of the valley. The girl told the boy about a brilliant house of light that appeared every morning. She said she would wake him up and show him.

Early the next morning the two sat on the cottage front porch. As the sun rose, a house, as if set ablaze by the sun, appeared on the hillside across the valley.

The boy realized immediately that the house of brilliant light was his own cottage.

The poet T.S. Eliot wrote, "At the end of all our exploring / will be to arrive where we started / and know the place for the first time." In preaching the parables of the buried treasure, the pearls and the dragnet, Jesus challenges us to see our lives and the world around us with eyes of faith in order to

recognize the many blessings and good things that are ours already. Let the light of God's peace and compassion illuminate your vision to embrace the blessings of your own cottage; look within your home and circle of friends to behold the colors of love and acceptance, of forgiveness and support that God enables all of us to give and receive.

Knights of Columbus

A big thanks to Dave Herring for helping us to launch our new *Knights of Columbus* which will be called *Monsignor Martin B. Power Council #14573*. The new officers are:

Grand Knight - William Post
Deputy Grand Knight - Richard White
Chancellor - Tony Versi
Warden - Mike Walters
Advocate - Fernando Palacios
Recorder - Dave Sullivan
Financial Secretary - Jeffery Chin
Treasurer - Steve Richards
Inside Guard - Ray Sepulveda
Outside Guard - Matt Nanna
Trustee 1 year - Mike Conners
Trustee 2 year - Jim Doyle
Trustee 3 year - John Hemel
Membership Director - John Miller
Church Director - Ray Lawrence
Community Director - Jerry Grillo
Council Director - Chris Kelly
Family Director - K.J. Baker
Youth Director - Sal Grasso
Lecturer - Mark Goley

We hope to also form a *Woman's Auxiliary*. Deacon Michael will be the Chaplain of the new council.

Catholic Radio: I hope you are enjoying the Catholic Radio station and telling your friends about it. This past week, one of the Board Members shared the following:

... A woman approached an Ascension parishioner and said she noticed the Catholic radio bumper sticker on her car and asked how she could make a donation to the station. She shared how, although she was not a Catholic, she really enjoyed listening to the station every night before she went to bed.

Have a blessed week,

