

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY

1 Kings 3:5, 7–12
Romans 8:28–30
Matthew 13:44–52

MONDAY

Matthew 13:31–35

"The Kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed . . ."

TUESDAY

Matthew 13:36–43

"The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man."

WEDNESDAY

Matthew 13:44–46

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure . . ."

THURSDAY

Matthew 13:47–53

"The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous . . ."

FRIDAY*

Matthew 13:54–58

"Where did this man get such wisdom . . ."

SATURDAY

Matthew 14:1–12

" . . . they regarded him as a prophet . . ."

What Do You Treasure?

During the perilous times of Roman occupation, it was a common practice to hide valuables in a field. In this last section of Matthew's parable narratives, the Gospel opens with the great joy that is experienced when a common laborer sold everything to purchase the field in which he had buried his treasure. This same joy filled the rich merchant. First he searched for a pearl of great value, and then he sold all he had to buy it.

These two parables proclaim that the reign of God is worth our all. The Kingdom of God or God's plan for restoring peace and justice on earth is the treasure for which we were created. One way we can know that we are tuned into the reign of God is the surprising joy that fills our spirit.

The parable is similar to that of the weeds and wheat in last week's Gospel. There is an additional dimension presented in this parable. At that time fishermen spun out the net into a great circle, pulling all sorts of fish and debris into its confines. Here we are reminded that God's love encircles all, the rich and poor, the good and the bad.

Just as Solomon prayed, not for riches or fame, but for the wisdom to judge what would be best for his people, we must seek a heart full of wisdom and understanding. True wisdom understands that the Kingdom is indeed the greatest treasure beside which all else fades. Today Jesus asks us: "Do you understand all these things?"



The Faith of the Church

The Church is founded upon the Good News of the coming of God's Kingdom proclaimed by the life and teachings of Jesus. While here and not yet, the mystery of the Kingdom of God is a way of understanding that God is continually calling us into union with him through Jesus. The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God through the gifts of the Spirit and witness of the life of Jesus (Cf. *Lumen gentium*, no 5).



Questions of the Week

The Gospel invites us to give our all, let go of everything else and choose the Kingdom as the focus of our lives. With this wise way of making choices, we will experience great joy even in times of distress. This proclamation of the Good News calls us to treasure God's way over and above our own.

Adults

What lifestyle changes could I make to focus more on the reign of God?

Children

What do I treasure?

Responding to God's Word . . .

We make choices every day. Many are minute choices: what to wear, what to eat. Yet, each choice affects the lives of others. Each decision is an opportunity to center our energies on the treasure we value most. For example, when we choose our food, it has a ripple effect on local farmers, the industrial agriculture business, and on our health. Furthermore how we recycle and dispose the waste from the products we consume has a greater effect on our environment.

Of course, decisions that impact our being like changing jobs,

moving to a new location, choosing a school or a partner for life—all call for wisdom. One can pray for insight to recognize the 'pearl' in these major choices and then look at the ripple effect that comes from the various options. When a choice is made and there is peace in living out that choice, it is a good sign that it is in tune with God's reign.

Simply put, we often know when we make the right and wise choice by the joy we experience. Whenever there is deep joy in your heart, it is a sign that God's reign is present and active within you.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Have a dinner conversation about how you experience happiness when you make decisions that will build up and sustain the lives of others.

In the workplace or in school. Start a paper and cardboard recycling program in your workplace or school. Research where the waste goes and how it is reused.

In the community. Work together to create a neighborhood or parish garden in a common area. Encourage neighbors to compost their grass, leaves, and vegetable matter.



Meditation Moment

An elderly lady in Scotland was so poor her neighbors had to support her. They were happy to do this, but what bothered some of them was that her son had gone to America and become rich. The mother defended her son, saying, "He writes me every week and always sends me a little picture. See," she said. "I keep them in my Bible." Between the pages of her Bible were hundreds of U.S. bank notes. The woman had a treasure in her Bible, but didn't realize it.

For reflection . . .

To what extent do I need to rediscover the treasure of my Bible: Jesus Christ?

CHRIST IS NOT VALUED AT ALL
UNLESS HE IS VALUED ABOVE ALL.

SAINT AUGUSTINE

FROM *VISION* BY MARK LINK, SJ

Guide Us, God

Guide us, O God,
to choose wisely each
day. May our decisions
bring peace to a war-weary
world, justice to those who are
exploited, and compassion to the
suffering. Spirit of God, fill us with
passion for building your Kingdom
here on earth. Risen Christ, instill
in us the desire to let go of our
selfish desires in order to bring life
and love to others. Father, create
in our hearts a new way of seeing
and hearing your voice
throughout each day.
May we rejoice in
knowing you are
always near.
Amen.

*Carry this thought in your heart
as a guide for your faith journey
this week.*

**For where your treasure is,
there your heart will be also.**

Matthew 6:21

Profile in Faith

The Catholic Climate Covenant
was begun in 2006 to
address the issues of global
climate change that affect
all peoples. The principles
of the organization include:
thoughtful, deliberate, and
reasoned action; concern
for those least able to bear
the burden of environmental
degradation; and promotion of
solidarity over self-interest.

Author: Carol A. Gura

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