

17th Sunday of Ordinary Time

1 Kings 3:5,7-12
Ps 119:57,72,76-77,
and 127-130
Romans 8:28-30
Matthew 13:44-52

Monday July 31
St. Ignatius of Loyola
Exodus 32:15-24,30-34
Ps 106:19-23
Matthew 13:31-35

Tuesday August 1
St. Alphonsus Liguori
Exodus 33:7-11; 34:5b-9,28
Ps 103:6-13
Matthew 13:36-43

Wednesday August 2
Exodus 34:29-35
Ps 99:5-7,9
Matthew 13:44-46

Thursday August 3
Exodus 40:16-21,34-38
Ps 84:3-6a,8a,11
Matthew 13:47-53

Friday August 4
St. John Vianney
Leviticus 23:1,4-11,
15-16,27,34b-37
Ps 81:3-6,10-11ab
Matthew 13:54-58

Saturday August 5
Leviticus 25:1,8-17
Ps 67:2-3,5,7-8
Matthew 14:1-12

Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God is like a buried treasure, a pearl purchased at all cost, and a net from which the bad catch of fish will be tossed away and the good catch will be valued.

In other words, our Christian lives are a huge cache of valuables. If our treasure chest has any worthless trash, the garbage needs to be tossed away to make room for more valuables. Some of our treasures have only temporary, earthly value, and ultimately they will be worthless unless they're used for the kingdom of God.

The reading from Romans tells us that all things work together for the good of those who love God. As we purge our lives of false pearls and dead fish, we become more like our Lord. We become more useful to the kingdom of God. Even the bad things that happen to us, under the creative hand of our all-powerful, mercifully loving God, get put to good use as polishing cloths that

brighten our pearls and bring out from us a better shine.

In the first reading, Solomon could have asked God for great wealth and he would have received it, but he asked for an understanding heart so that he'd have wisdom to rule the nation well. Even though he ruled imperfectly, his reputation as the wisest king on earth



spread throughout the known world *and* he accumulated great wealth.

This is meant to teach us that when we seek first the treasures of God's kingdom, then we can safely use the treasures of the earth, because God's wisdom guides us in using them for the benefit of his kingdom. The more we love Christ and follow his ways, the easier it is to identify what's really valuable, separate out the junk that does not belong to God, and use everything else for his purposes.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What treasures are buried within you? What pearls of wisdom have you gained, and what did it cost you to learn these?
2. Write a list of your many good qualities. How do they prove that the Lord's presence is within you?
3. Choose one treasure, gift, or pearl that God has given to you – something that reveals the kingdom of God. How did you discover it or gain it?
4. What affect does this pearl have on others?