



Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
July 30, 2023

Wising Up

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

There are various kinds of wisdom: the kind you get by watching carefully to discover how something works, or by learning from a mistake; the wisdom in taking advice from someone and not making the mistake he made; the political, social, or religious wisdom learned by those who work in these vocations. There is also wisdom that is just beyond our reach, the kind that is found only in God.

This Sunday's readings discuss various kinds of wisdom. King Solomon asks for "a listening heart" (1 Kings 3:9), the

knowledge needed to rule his people wisely. He is told he can ask for anything: long life, riches, security from his enemies, all blessings that would certainly benefit him. Instead he asks for something to benefit his people. It seems he is wise enough to know he needs such wisdom. The psalm response praises the law, the religious tradition that provides instruction for living a life of holiness and thus reaping the rewards of such a life.

The parable in the Gospel describes various life situations in which decisions have to be made. In the first two instances, a question is posed: What is the kingdom of heaven worth to you? What are you willing to give up in order to attain it? The third depicts fishing with a net, a very strenuous task. A question here might be: Are you willing to work hard at this? Are you discerning in separating good actions from bad? It takes real wisdom to answer such questions. †

Sunday Readings

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

Give your servant, therefore, a listening heart to judge your people and to distinguish between good and evil.

Romans 8:28-30

We know that all things work for good for those who love God.

Matthew 13:44-52 or 13:44-46

[Jesus said,] "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it."

What is the kingdom of heaven worth to you?



A Word from Pope Francis

Do not forget that Declaration which proclaimed that all men and women are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights and that governments exist in order to protect and defend those rights....May this country and each of you be renewed in gratitude for the many blessings and freedoms that you enjoy.

INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA,
SEPTEMBER 26, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who are the wise people in your life?
- Do you have someone to whom you can turn for wisdom and guidance?

Do We Bury Our Treasure in More Stuff?

By Paige Byrne Shortal

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

Matthew 13:44

I had the opportunity to hear Captain Scott Grady speak about his experience behind enemy lines in Bosnia. He was a young man, a member of an elite group of fighter pilots, with the world at his doorstep. He said that as he lay hidden for six days, hoping for rescue, what he missed and longed to see again was not his car or his house or his stereo system, but his mom. He was sorry his brother and sister didn't know how much he loved them.

We spend our precious lives acquiring objects that are not even worth the time to dust and make our homes into closets to store our stuff. We build stage sets; kitchens where no meals are cooked;



dining rooms where no one gathers to eat; living rooms where no one lives; bedrooms where we are too stressed out to sleep and where there is little time or energy left over for loving.

We watch television shows that wouldn't challenge the intellect of a cat; page through magazines without time to read the substance; spend our evenings at meetings because it would look bad if we

missed; go to church hoping for a short Mass and leave early to drive to the store to buy more stuff.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.”

Matthew 13:45–46

How do we recognize the pearl of great price? Perhaps first, it helps to know what we're looking for. So often, we fail to notice that what we really want, we already have. We think we want the prestigious job, the bigger house, the smarter kids, the nicer body.

If you were like Captain O'Grady, possibly living your last day, what lost opportunities would you mourn and what would fill you with gratitude? †

So often, we fail to notice that what we really want, we already have.



God of Wisdom, change our minds to know the good, our hearts to desire the good, our wills to do only good. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

Judge Not, Because You Might Miss Out on Something Good

In the Communion line, I saw Mr. Incongruity. Standing among the formally attired, chanting assembly, this young fellow had spiked, purple hair. His face was studded with metal, like a ham with cloves. He wore frayed jeans and a black T-shirt emblazoned with these words: “If you eat meat, you're a cannibal.” He was obviously an outsider who dressed strangely and ate weirdly—just like John the Baptist. And just like John the Baptist, Mr. Incongruity taught me something about prophecy. When I first saw him, I judged him. Fortunately, I came to know a young man bearing gifts of generosity, warmth, and commitment who only needed a little maturing. God gives us many gifts we don't appreciate because they're not what we anticipated.

Kenneth G. Davis, OMF Conv., *Daybreaks*, 2009

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 31—August 5

Monday, St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Ex 32:15–24, 30–34 / Mt 13:31–35

Tuesday, St. Alphonsus Liguori:

Ex 33:7–11; 34:5b–9, 28 / Mt 13:36–43

Wednesday, Weekday:

Ex 34:29–35 / Mt 13:44–46

Thursday, Weekday:

Ex 40:16–21, 34–38 / Mt 13:47–53

Friday, St. John Vianney:

Lv 23:1, 4–11, 15–16, 27, 34b–37 / Mt 13:54–58

Saturday, Weekday:

Lv 25:1, 8–17 / Mt 14:1–12

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