

OUR PRIORITIES - 17TH SUN OT (Mt. 13: 44-52)

What is your Treasure

This weeks Gospel concerning the purchasing of buried treasure in an abandoned field or a pearl of great value, brings us back to the basics of our faith and the serious choices we must make in life. If you were to take to the streets and ask passes-by, "Do you believe in God?" Most people would probably reply, "Of course." Or when asked, "Do believe in an after life, and the inexpressible joy of eternity in heaven?" They would reply, "yes." And if we were to then ask these same people, "therefore shouldn't your getting to heaven be your greatest priority?" These same people would probably respond, "of course."

So, if this is the basic, popular belief of most people, how do you explain that almost 2/3rds of all the baptized Catholics in this country don't attend Sunday Mass? Or that over 30 percent of those who do attend Sunday Mass, don't believe in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist! What are their priorities? Where are their treasures?

In our ever growing secular world, it seems that so many people seek to re-create for themselves a worldly heaven on earth, a self-designed, man-made religion to replace Almighty God's eternal Kingdom! So many seem to be searching for something of the divine, or at least, some transcendental meaning in their lives. But, these same searchers feel that they must always be in control, and are not willing to allow anyone, not even God, Himself to question their values or life-styles! They insist that man is the master of his own destiny, by reason of his superior intellect, thereby entitling him to re-define what is good or evil to suit himself, or even re-make Almighty God, after man's own image!

My point is that God shouldn't be interpreted according to one's personal preferences, for Christ's revelation is meant to challenge every person, to both accept the divine message, and to live it fully.

So the central question raised by these parables is - do we concentrate merely on the outward glitter of worldly attractions or the comforts material wealth provides, over and above God's eternal Kingdom? Jesus answers these questions by portraying a truly wise and discerning man, who recognizes the precious and permanent value of God's Kingdom over and above his short lived earthly substitutes and expectations. He uses the analogies of a treasure buried in an abandoned field, or a pearl valued beyond all price to make His point. And He concludes that the Kingdom of God is much like these priceless treasures! It is worth sacrificing all we have to acquire!

Finally, the light of Christ helps us to see and appreciate our true identity. Once we recognize who we really are, and our unsurpassed value, then don't we become, in God's eyes, much like that buried treasure, or that pearl valued beyond price? For even when our metal was tarnished and marred by sin, still Christ came to us, to restore our veneer and the surface of our being! Weren't we also purchased by the Son of God, at a great price, and at a great cost to Himself?

God bless you all