

## 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

My brothers and sisters, those of you who have known me since I first came to St. Anthony's 13 years ago can take a short nap, because you have already heard the story of the Treasure of the Santa Nina de Atocha, and the opportunity I had to buy the last shares for a Thousand dollars a share by Mr Mel Fischer. They found the wreck about six months later. Each share became worth about 5 million dollars apiece! I passed it up, because I thought it was too risky!

My beloved brothers and sisters, as human being, we often seek the solutions of the society around us; but, solutions are not the same thing as wisdom! Look at the current situation in our politics in this country: everyone is screaming solutions, but we don't see very many who are seeking the wisdom of God! In the beginning, Soloman was seeking the wisdom of God, but as his kingdom became more complicated with alliances with neighboring kingdoms; he sought expedient solutions, which led to idolatry and ruin! Seeking the wisdom of God would have ensured that he would have remained a good king, who was committed to the good of his people, and not simply political solutions which were not solutions at all!

In the second reading, St. Paul teaches us if we are going to be truly wise, then we must seeking the Love of God above all things, and the Love of God always leads to the wisest course of action, even, if sometimes, it maybe painful and constly! Throughout history, God has taught us how to face all things in the wisdom of God which is embodied in the Word Made Flesh, the coming of God in the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord! And Jesus teaches us to seek the Holiness of God, the Kingdom of God above all things to find true happiness and joy- everything else eventually leads to ruin and desolation!

In the Gospel for today, Jesus teaches that the search for the Wisdom of God, is like the search for unexpected wealth and treasure beyond our wildest imagination. In each case, the person who finds the treasure, finds it in the pursuit of their daily lives, and that is how we also find the greatest of all treasures, our relationship and intimacy with our God!

Finding a treasure in a field leased by a peasant farmer, actually happens. Because of the many wars and armies moving through the Holy Land, people would bury their silver and gold in clay jars. Sometimes, they were never able to retrieve them. Farmers in the Holy Land, even today find buried jars with coins and heirlooms in them. Only about six months ago, a farmer dug up a couple of clay jars worth a fortune in ancient coins. The tenant farmer in the Gospel would sell everything he had in order to purchase such a field containing the treasure!

Pearls, in the ancient world, were more precious than any other jewel, including diamonds! A truly great pearl, was worth a king's fortune. To find such a pearl was a once in a lifetime event. There was no diving- equipment, everything was limited to free diving to about 30 feet!

The story of gathering the fish from the nets, is still a common occurrence amongst Jewish fishermen! Some fish, like some foods were considered unclean, for example, fish without scales or crustaceans, were not Kosher and had to be thrown back! Jesus uses this last story to tell us about the weeding out of evil from our lives, and the weeding out of those whose lives are evil. He tells us that those who seek the Holiness and Wisdom of God and His Kingdom first, shall be gathered into His Kingdom; whereas those who pursue evil and the pleasure of this world over God, will suffer the consequence of hell.

Jesus teaches us to be diligent in seeking the holiness of God; some opportunities only come along once. Wisdom means to spare no effort in pursuing this relationship with God, for this is the greatest treasure- our intimacy with Him forever; whereas, the consequence of the solutions of this world will inevitably lead us to damnation!