

July 27, 2014

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Introduction to the First Reading: I think we are all familiar with the story of the genie in the bottle. Someone sees a bottle floating in the ocean, retrieves it, and pulls out the cork. A genie pops out of the bottle and says:” “Thank you! I’ve been trapped in that bottle for 500 years. I will grant you any one wish.”

Well, in today’s reading something even more wonderful happens. The God of all creation appears to Solomon, the son of David, and tells him that He is pleased with him and says in effect: “You can ask me for any one wish and I will grant it. What would you like?”

Reading 1 [1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12](#)

The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night.
God said, “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.”

Solomon answered:

“O LORD, my God, you have made me, your servant, king
to succeed my father David;
but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act.
I serve you in the midst of the people whom you have chosen,
a people so vast that it cannot be numbered or counted.
Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart
to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong.
For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?”

The LORD was pleased that Solomon made this request.

So God said to him:

“Because you have asked for this—
not for a long life for yourself,
nor for riches,
nor for the life of your enemies,
but for understanding so that you may know what is right—
I do as you requested.
I give you a heart so wise and understanding
that there has never been anyone like you up to now,
and after you there will come no one to equal you.”

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130](#)

R/ (97a) **Lord, I love your commands.**

I have said, O LORD, that my part
is to keep your words.

The law of your mouth is to me more precious
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

R/ **Lord, I love your commands.**

Let your kindness comfort me
according to your promise to your servants.

Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.

R/ Lord, I love your commands.

For I love your command
more than gold, however fine.
For in all your precepts I go forward;
every false way I hate.

R/ Lord, I love your commands.

Wonderful are your decrees;
therefore I observe them.
The revelation of your words sheds light,
giving understanding to the simple.

R/ Lord, I love your commands.

Introduction to the Second Reading: If I went home and wanted water, it would help if I would start by opening up the tap. St. Paul tells us that in the spiritual life it starts when we do our best to try to love God. If we do that then many wonderful things will follow.

Reading 2 [Rom 8:28-30](#)

Brothers and sisters:

We know that all things work for good for those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose.
For those he foreknew he also predestined
to be conformed to the image of his Son,
so that he might be the firstborn
among many brothers and sisters.
And those he predestined he also called;
and those he called he also justified;
and those he justified he also glorified.

Gospel [Mt 13:44-52](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

“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.

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.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea,
which collects fish of every kind.

When it is full they haul it ashore
and sit down to put what is good into buckets.

What is bad they throw away.

Thus it will be at the end of the age.

The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous
and throw them into the fiery furnace,

where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

“Do you understand all these things?”

They answered, “Yes.”

And he replied,

“Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven
is like the head of a household
who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.”

or [Mt 13:44-46](#)

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he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.”

Homily: This Sunday’s Gospel is a continuation of last Sunday’s Gospel. If you recall, last week in Matthew 13 Jesus told three parables. A parable is a wonderful story meant to teach a spiritual lesson. The fun part is that Jesus didn’t tell us the answers. We had to figure them out for ourselves.

I suggested that we discuss the parables with our friends and if possible with our families. Ask each one what they think the parable means. What is the lesson for us? Begin with the youngest first. They often have the most unusual answers. Parables have many meanings. There is no one correct answer. All the answers can be right.

This Sunday Jesus gives us four more parables. Last week He suggested one possible solution for one of the parables. He does the same this week. Try these out too, especially with the family. Plus I will give you one more, a modern one that I made up. Look for the possible spiritual meanings for each one.

Here is the new one. One day a young dog was chasing his tail. He was running around and around and around in a circle trying to catch his tail. An old dog happened to pass by. He watched for a few minutes then said: “What are you doing?” The young dog replied: “I’m trying to catch my tail. Yesterday I almost caught it! I figure that if I can run a little faster today I’ll catch it!”

The old dog smiled and replied: “You know, when I was a puppy I used to chase my tail too. But I discovered something interesting. The faster I went chasing my tail, the faster my tail went away from me! But I also discovered something else, something surprising. When I stopped chasing my tail, and instead went about doing what I was supposed to be doing, my tail followed me! In fact wherever I went it went with me.