

Reading for the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

26th July 2026

First reading

1 Kings 3:5-6a, 7-12

‘You have asked for yourself understanding.’

In those days: The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, ‘Ask what I shall give you.’ And Solomon said, ‘O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?’

It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life, or riches, or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 119(118):57, 72. 76-77. 127-128. 129-130. R97a

O Lord, how I love your law!

You, O Lord, are my portion;

I have promised to obey your words.

The law from your mouth means more to me than large quantities of silver and gold.

Let your merciful love console me by your promise to your servant.

Show me compassion, that I may live, for your law is my delight.

That is why I love your commands more than finest gold,

why I rule my life by your precepts, and hate false ways.

Your decrees are wonderful indeed;

therefore my soul obeys them.

The unfolding of your word gives light, and understanding to the simple.

Second reading

Romans 8:28-30

‘He predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.’

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

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Gospel Acclamation

Cf. Matthew 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia.

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 13:44-52

‘He sells all that he has and buys that field.’

At that time: Jesus said to the crowd: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

‘Have you understood all these things?’ They said to him, ‘Yes.’ And he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

We are again presented today with three parables, two of which are closely linked in meaning, but with slight differences. The people of Jesus’ time would have understood them all very easily, as they were drawn from scenes of everyday life with which they were perfectly familiar.

For much of the time, we are chasing false treasures, mainly money, status and pleasure. For much of the time we are locked into the past—full of nostalgia or regrets, or focused on the future—not yet achieved longings and desires, or depressing fears and anxieties. Meanwhile the enriching present passes us by and the treasure is never discovered and the really valuable pearl is never found.

The first and second parables are in effect saying that to know God and to live according to the gospel are the most precious things in life. Through Jesus and the gospel we come to know and understand what is the real meaning of life, what are the most important things in life.

The third parable reminds us that the Church, and even the Kingdom in the process of its evolution, is full of all kinds of people. Our Church is a Church of both saints and sinners.

Judgment is for later; right now, it is for us to use the time given to us to go in search of the “treasure” and the “pearl of great value”—of the gift to be able to identify, with Jesus, the really true, the good and the beautiful, and to help others too in the same search.