



17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A – July 30, 2017

In the First Book of Kings in Chapter 3, Solomon shows us how to pray when we're asking God for a favor. God is pleased with his prayer. Solomon asks for wisdom, not because it will make him rich or famous, but because it will help him serve his people.

We too are called to serve.

In his letter to the Romans, we are reminded by St. Paul that God's intention for us is that we become like his son Jesus who came to serve, not to be served (Matthew 20:28). When people look at us, they should see the light of Jesus. He is the candle, we are the mirrors that reflect Him. Recall the words of St. Francis of Assisi, "... preach the Gospel every day and only if you have to - use words."

Words alone are usually empty. They are the sounding brass and tinkling symbols that St. Paul mentions in his letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 13:1). The people of his time had all the right words but they didn't have the right actions. They had forgotten how to love. Love for them was self-centered - the "what's in it for me" attitude that can be found in many places today. The compliment to Christians used to be, "Look at these Christians, how they love each other" – not "how they love themselves".



The best way to preach the Gospel is by way of example. Our actions always speak louder than words. Nagging people with judgmental words doesn't accomplish what Jesus had in mind. Going around with a long sour face, playing the role of a martyr, and criticizing everyone else does not win people over to our Faith. Someone once said, "If your religion makes you happy, tell your face".

In the Gospel today (Matthew 13:44-52), Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God. It's not like any earthly kingdom (John 18:36). You can't find it on a map. It isn't there, it's within us. It is wherever we are. And it is priceless. It is a kingdom of peace, patience, benignity, goodness, and kindness... (Galatians 5:22).

Jesus says it is like a pearl of great price. It is like a net filled with fish of all kinds. It is a kingdom where all are welcome. It is the only place where true happiness can be found.

Wouldn't it be a beautiful prayer of supplication to ask God the Father and the Holy Spirit to help us become more like Jesus so that we can lead others to Him and his kingdom. We have the capacity to do that. Jesus challenges us to get it done.

Recall the words of St. Theresa of Avila, "Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which He is to bless His people."

The Kingdom of Heaven is a pearl of great price. There are people in our world who will never meet our Lord or learn about His Kingdom except through you. You are the one whom God has chosen to help them find that "priceless pearl". Reflect today on how you do that and for whom you do that.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



Disciple?
Matthew 13:44-52

