

The Pastor's Corner...

See the Beauty of Your Faith

This Sunday, we hear the last three parables of chapter 13 of Matthew's Gospel. The first two, the parables about the Buried Treasure and the Merchant of Pearls, stress the sheer *joy* experienced by the one who discovers the Kingdom and gives up **all** other beautiful and valuable things for its sake, because the Kingdom is found to be more desirable than all else. The final parable of the Net is a fitting summary of all that has preceded it: it affirms both the *universality* of the Christian vocation, which excludes no one, and yet the necessity of a final *separation*, resulting from the judgment about who has been worthy of the calling and who has not.

The parables of the Buried Treasure and the Merchant of Pearls strongly moved me in my childhood, and they continue to do so even now. I find something extremely attractive, intriguing and invigorating in these short stories, something that does not allow me to pass by them idly.

Both parables describe people who found something so valuable and beautiful that they cannot resist obtaining it. Although both parables send the same message, there is one fundamental difference between them. In the first parable one can easily understand the gain of the person: he found the treasure in the field, so he went to buy that field in order to possess the hidden treasure. In this way he **enriched himself** greatly. He paid only for the field but gained something in addition, something much more valuable – the hidden treasure. One must agree that he did very good business.

In the second parable, however, one cannot see a similar net gain. The person who found the beautiful pearl did not enrich himself in the

same way as the person in the previous parable. He simply paid for the real value of the pearl. This conclusion has always disturbed me. But only initially. In fact, a different conclusion from these parables has to be drawn. One must remember that

the true merchant is not connected with his trade by a simple monetary



gain/loss pattern. A true merchant **loves** what he is doing! When he finds something beautiful, he does not calculate its monetary value. We often fail to imitate the attitude of this true merchant because we are subject to the temptation to measure the value of everything by how many dollars it costs. Even friendship is measured in such a way. A true, good merchant **loves** his work and is able to notice something beautiful that appears to him and led by his passion for beauty, he strives to do everything to gain it.

Is Jesus not calling us to be such a true merchant? Doesn't He, through the Gospel and through the ministry of the Church, present to us something of extraordinary beauty and invite us to follow it? Instead of picking up and cherishing true diamonds given to us, diamonds of our faith, don't we sometimes prefer to deal with the dirt and pebbles on the streets?

May God help us to open our eyes to see the extraordinary beauty of the promises that are presented to us by Jesus—promises for this earthly life and promises for the life to come in God's eternal Kingdom.

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