

July 26, 2026 Homily
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/072626.cfm>

We all have a sinful tendency to separate what we consider good people from bad people. And this tendency is very evident in our world now, especially in the controversies about immigration, about race, about religion, about politics, and about war. According to this tendency, only some lives matter; only a few people have rights; only some of us deserve to be treated with respect. For Christians, according to the teachings of Jesus, life is sacred, all living creatures on this planet are to be respected and protected, and every single human being is not only sacred, but God's beloved child.

The parables of the treasure and the pearl tell us that for God, every single person, is a great treasure, and a unique and invaluable pearl. These parables remind us of an important truth that many Christians still deny: Every person has been made in the image and likeness of God.

Today's Gospel calls us to look for the best treasure within our hearts. Each one of us has been made with a unique greatness. This truth about human dignity is hidden to the arrogant of the world, but to those who recognize that only with God's Wisdom, history can be directed towards the paths of justice and love. It is always the truest truth about humanity.

Dear brothers and sisters: Today the Lord calls us to see the greatness that dwells within each single person on this planet. In the eyes of God, each one of us is a unique treasure or a great pearl. As the merchant in the Gospel, every day God searches for us. The challenge for us is to see and accept that our neighbors are expressions of God's love, and to treat them as God has treated us. It could be an immigrant, a person from the other political party, an immoral sinner, or a non-believer. If we love the God of Jesus, we will see others as God sees them, and we will treat them as God has treated us. In doing this, we find how to change the world according to God's will.

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven as a buried treasure that is discovered by a person who then sells everything to buy the land that holds that treasure. Jesus, here is talking about is Heavenly Father: If we want to understand how much God has paid for that treasure, we just need to look at Jesus hanging on the Cross: He offered himself for us. Jesus' sacrifice is the price paid by God for the salvation of us all and for

the end of hatred and violence and injustice and divisions in this world. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only treasure that holds eternal and infinite value. This treasure also opens our eyes so that we can see in others, their greatness, their uniqueness. A world broken by suffering and injustice, by corruption and violence, by racism and hate, needs people willing to treat each other with brotherly love, justice, respect, mercy and tolerance.

If we see in each other a pearl loved by God, a treasure with infinite gifts, and an image of God himself, then we will change the way we treat each other. This is what the world needs now. This is authentic Christian spirituality. In the way we treat others, we express what kind of God we believe in. In the way we love, forgive, respect and embrace others, either we love God, or we crucify him. A Christian cannot hold hate in his heart.

The world is filled with great pearls, with amazing hidden treasures that only become visible to humble people. May Divine Wisdom help us to see God present in his entire creation, but in a special way, to see and love God present in every human being. "Blessed are the pure of heart, For they will see God."

The Universal Prayer
Sunday July 26th, 2026
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, through our baptism we have been called by the Father to be true images of his Son, Jesus, and so, following his example, we open our hearts in prayer.

1. May Pope Leo and Bishop Luis Zarama be filled with that Holy Wisdom of the Spirit, so that they can teach and serve with truth, compassion and humility.

We pray to the Lord.

2. May the youth of the Church follow the example of the youthful Solomon, and rather than success, power and material wealth, seek true Wisdom in the Spirit which will guide them through life.

We pray to the Lord

3. May each of us long for the Kingdom of Heaven and seek it as the true treasure prepared for us, value it as God's gift of great worth, and know that it is Jesus who gathers us into the Kingdom at the end of time.

We pray to the Lord

4. May grandparents and the elderly be treated with respect, be honored for their wisdom, and be cared for in their needs, especially when frailty limits their abilities.

We pray to the Lord.

5. May all people in the world who are carrying the burden of war, poverty, the effects of drought and natural disasters around the world, along with grief, not be forgotten, but receive the care which they desperately need.

We pray to the Lord.

6. May the Diocese of Raleigh and the religious order of Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe have an increase in the number of vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.

We pray to the Lord.

7. May our deceased relatives, friends and parishioners be welcomed into heaven and live in the joy of God's presence.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Lord and Father, rule and guide our lives by the truth of your word. May it console us in times of need, keep us by your side.