

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Silence, solitude, stillness and serenity make us ready
for a new meeting with God.**

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask something of me and I will give it to you." Solomon prayed for wisdom...an understanding heart and the gift to know right from wrong. Because he did not ask anything for himself, for his personal gain, for wealth or for long life, God promised him, "a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you...and riches and glory..."

Pray for the wisdom of God. Pray that God will help you make wise choices.

Psalms 119

This Psalm, the longest in the Book of Psalms, praises God for giving such splendid laws and instruction for people to live by. The author glorifies and thanks God for the Torah, prays for protection from sinners enraged by others' fidelity to the law, laments the cost of obedience, delights in the law's consolations, begs for wisdom to understand the precepts, and asks for the rewards of keeping them.

The Psalmist is fascinated with God's word directing and guiding human life. The poem is acrostic; its twenty-two stanzas (of eight verses each) are in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the eight verses within a stanza begins with the same letter. Each verse contains one word for "instruction." There are nine words of "instruction," - law, statute, commandment, precept, testimony, word, judgment, way, and promise.

**With all my heart I seek you;
Let me not stray from your commands.
Within my heart I treasure your promise,
That I may not sin against you.**

Romans 8:28-30

Paul tells the Christians in Rome that God knows all our weaknesses, even how difficult it is for us to pray. So, he gives us his spirit to help us in our weakness. Since we do not know how to pray as we should, the spirit prays in us, expresses our innermost longings.

God makes all things work together for the good of those whom he has called. So listen to the spirit and move with the spirit as the spirit moves.

Mathew 13:44-52

Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a treasure buried in a field. A man found it, hid it, rejoiced in his find, and sold all he had and bought that field. He did not just pick up the pearl...he bought the whole field.

The kingdom is buried deep within, here and now.....and not something yet to happen. The kingdom is found within the context our daily life and responsibilities and not in some extraordinary, earth-shattering event.

All that surrounds the kingdom gains a new meaning because the treasure of the kingdom has been found. This treasure is worth sacrificing everything that we have.

Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a pearl of great value for which a merchant would sell all he owns. A pearl was the most beautiful thing that the listeners of Jesus could imagine.

The kingdom is presented as the most beautiful thing that one can dream of and contemplate and it is worth all the sacrifice that one may have to make.

Once again, Jesus used examples from daily work situations to speak about the kingdom and the things of heaven. The kingdom was compared to a net cast into the sea which gathers all kinds of things. The net was drawn to land and the catch was separated – the good was put into containers and the useless material thrown away.

The net thrown into the sea cannot discriminate....it draws all kinds of things, its contents will be a mixture... it is the nature of the kingdom on earth...all kinds of people, the good, the bad, the useful, the useless and so on. It describes the nature of the kingdom and the nature of the Church as all inclusive. The Church must remain open to all.

The parable also teaches us that eventually, separation will happen...good will be separated from the bad. Jesus said, “Angels will come” for the separation. Judgments must be left to God and it is not ours to make.

Cultivate non-judgmental attitude! Reflect on the all-embracing love God.

Saint of the Day, July 26 – Saints Joachim and Anne and 8 other saints are remembered this day.

Saints Joachim and Anne are the parents of Mary and the grandparents of Jesus. Nothing is mentioned about them in the Gospels, not even their names. We also know nothing factual about them except that they existed. Even the names Joachim and Anne come from a legendary source written more than a century after Jesus died. All we know from tradition is that Anne and Joachim were devout, god-fearing people. The name Ann is the English form of the Biblical name Hannah, which means “grace”. St. Ann is the patroness of Christian mothers.

The heroism and holiness of these people, however, is inferred from the whole family atmosphere around Mary in the Scriptures. The strong character of Mary in making decisions, her continuous practice of prayer, her devotion to the laws of her faith, her steadiness at moments of crisis, and her devotion to her relatives—all indicate a close-knit, loving family that looked forward to the next generation even while retaining the best of the past.

Joachim and Anne, whether these are their real names or not, represent that entire quiet series of generations who faithfully perform their duties, practice their faith, and establish an atmosphere for the coming of the Messiah, but remain obscure.

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