

# Seventeenth Sunday of the Year – July 26, 2020

1 Kings 3: 5, 7-12 – Romans 8: 28-30 – Matthew 13: 44-46

I do not know how, in the time to come, in the years to come, we will look back on this year, these last few months, that we have been going through. I do not know what story will be told to those who did not experience them. But, I do know this. I do know that the parables and examples Jesus uses, such as we have heard today, took on a deeper and richer meaning during the two months that public Masses were suspended, and with no obligation to attend since we have started up again

The treasure that we have found and the pearl of great price that is ours have greater meaning not only in the gift of the Eucharist we share, but also in the gift that is the presence of one another here. This has become so much more evident to me and has been an inspiration, a strengthening and reinforcement of my Faith.

So, as we have come together today, what have we heard from God through the message of the Scriptures we have heard? Simply stated, it is a response to the invitation God makes to us that is sought. We are invited to choose to make known the great value of the active presence in our lives of the relationship we enjoy with our loving God.

The thoughts of Saint Paul that we heard are a starting point. All things, even the most difficult, work for the good of

those who love God. We are called upon to recognize God's purpose, God's intent, in creation. This is what is offered to us who share the gift of Faith that has been handed down to us in different ways, and in different circumstances. What is God's intent? To be known, to be acknowledged by us and through us.

Coupled with these more theological reflections of Saint Paul is the stunning example given by Solomon. He is assured of God's love for him. He is given the opportunity to choose what he seeks for himself. Of all the possibilities open to him, benefits for himself that he could have wanted, such as a long life, the defeat of his enemies or untold riches, he desires understanding, a wisdom to judge right and wrong, so that he could carry out what was his role in life: being a fitting ruler of his people. So, too, we all have the chance to choose how best we are to live our own roles in life.

We can understand that Jesus is reminding us of much the same idea. The kingdom of God available to us is really an extension of God's love for us shown in Jesus Christ. But we must respond to this offer. It is our choice. Do we value being part of that abiding presence of God in our lives like a treasure which we might conceal, or a valuable pearl for which we sell everything we might have in order to possess?

In some ways these images from ancient Scriptures have taken on a new meaning for me. It is my hope that you can join me in recognizing that this particular time we are experiencing is a true opportunity to express a renewed, a deepened, a strengthened faith in a truly good and gracious God.