

July 25-26, 2020

17th Sunday of Ordinary Times

St Pius X Parish, Calgary

Once upon a time there was a farmer who owned a small farm of land. The land was stony but he worked hard, and for a while he was blessed with a certain happiness and contentment. But then he began to feel that there was something missing in his life, and he felt empty as a result. One evening a stranger passed that way and asked for a night's lodgings. The farmer was only too glad of his company, for he was pining for excitement and distraction.

Around the fire that night the stranger began to talk about diamonds. He told the farmer that if he could find a diamond, even one no bigger than the nail of his little finger, he would never have to do another tap of work. The farmer was very impressed. He didn't get a wink of sleep all the night thinking about diamonds.

Next day the stranger departed leaving the farmer more than a little unhappy. As the days went by he got more and more restless. He began to neglect his farm. Finally he sold it cheaply, and went off roaming the world in search of diamonds. He travelled far but found none. In the end, overcome by despair, he committed suicide. Meanwhile, the man who bought his farm was out ploughing. One day the plough turned up a stone which shone in the sunlight. It turned out to be a very valuable diamond. When he went back to the spot he found lots more. It turned out to be one of the richest diamond mines ever found.

While we cannot help feeling sorry for the farmer, we have to say that he was a very foolish man. Had he persevered with what he had, he would undoubtedly have found the mine himself. Yet he is typical of a good many people. In many cases it's not that people are afraid of hard work and sacrifice. It's just that they lack wisdom. They don't

know what is important. They pursue the wrong goals. They look in the wrong places. They sell their birthright.

The lives of many today are purposeless and empty. They are no longer able to distinguish what is important in life, and have to content themselves with a diminished and distorted picture of the world, which results in suffering and impoverishment.

They return again and again to the same old wells of pleasure, wells which they know will never quench their thirst. There are so many influences and pressures on us which lead us to put 'making a living for today' rather than 'living for the future promised us'. We are called to put our hope in God and his Kingdom, and to live according to his will.

Today's readings invite us to re-examine our goals in life. What am I living for? What do I want in life, for myself? For those I love? Is there something still hidden that if I found it I would give everything up for it?

Christ offers us the pearl of great price. He invites us to enter the Kingdom of God. Only God can quench our thirst for happiness. Only God can satisfy our hunger for meaning and love. If we lose God, we lose all. If we find God, we find all.

Wisdom is a gift of God. It means that we put our trust in his word rather than in human wisdom and human experts; to see life from God's point of view. It gives us an understanding, a vision of life that cannot be bought. In this sense then, wisdom is the pearl of great price. Our tragedy as believers is not that we cannot find the pearl, but that we are unwilling to pay the price for it. The pearl is offered to those who open their hands, letting go of all other things, and embrace it.

In just a few moments we will pray the preface, and at Father's invitation to "Lift up our hearts", we will respond "We lift them up to the Lord". This is the action we are invited to do, so that we can truly

receive the pearl of eternal life promised to us when we live for the Kingdom of God presented to us. May we have the grace to respond, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.