

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 26, 2020

An Understanding Heart

At the time our first reading from 1 Kings was written, most people believed they did their thinking with their hearts, not their minds. The heart didn't get involved with feelings. (Those were relegated to a person's kidneys!) So Solomon is basically asking God for the ability to think the right way: to judge things and people as God judges them – which is no easy matter.

Such an Understanding Heart would do us all well to employ in our daily lives, but especially when approaching the parables of Jesus. And we get three more of them today that are unique to Matthew's Gospel alone: the Parables of the Buried Treasure, the Pearl of Great Price and the Dragnet of Fish.

These stories are not riddles or final Jeopardy answers. Our story telling Savior uses Parables when he is trying to change a person's frame of mind and attempting to alter the way people process all the knowledge they receive. Parables are a means of retooling one's brain. They tell the listener, "You can't get to where I am unless you first change your frame of mind."

As Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan mention in *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach about Jesus' Birth*, "Jesus' parables subverted conventional ways of seeing life and God. They undermined ... a taken-for-granted way of seeing 'the way things are.'" But even more insightfully, the two scripture scholars note, "Seeing differently is the foundation of subversion". Perhaps more than anything else, Jesus' parables are to be blamed for his eventual crucifixion. The Jewish and Roman authorities simply didn't like the way he looked at reality. Anyone who processes people and situations through a different frame of mind is always a threat to the *status quo*.

According to biblical linguists, God's kingdom or the kingdom of heaven refers to God working effectively in our everyday lives. Jesus' basic "stump speech" revolved around one thing: God is present right here and now in everything we do, every person we encounter, every situation we face. We don't have to go to church, say another rosary, attend another Bible study, or even think holy, pious thoughts. We can't do anything to make God present. Jesus expects us to do only one thing: Recognize that Godly presence 24/7.

That's where repentance comes in. The Greek word for repent used in this context means much more than just being sorry for some evil thing we did and resolving never to do it again. The word *metanoia* implies we've experienced a 180-degree change in our value system. What we once thought important we now regard as insignificant, and vice versa. A true *metanoia* turns our whole life upside down. We become totally new persons. (That's why, for instance, even early Christians believed all our sins we committed before baptism were completely wiped out in baptism. Those sins were committed by a different person, a person who died in the process of his or her *metanoia*, "sacramentalized" by the dying and rising they experienced in baptism.) Only those who changed their value systems could actually surface God working in their daily lives.

A parable traps you into admitting something on one level that you'd never admit on another level. For instance, today's first two parables — the Buried Treasure in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price — presume the sky's the limit when we unexpectedly discover something extremely valuable that we could actually own. Everyone agrees: If an individual really wants the treasure or the pearl, he or she would "sell all they have" to acquire it. Only after his audience agrees with the obvious does Jesus spring the trap: Then why wouldn't they sacrifice all they had to acquire the ability of surfacing God working in their daily lives, something much more valuable than the treasure or the pearl?

Yet, it's also important to appreciate Jesus' belief that God actually is present in our daily lives, in the middle of all the good and bad we personally encounter. That's where his third parable comes in. Just as we can't dictate what kind of fish we pull up in a fishing net, so we cannot dictate the content of any given day. We don't have to

create or be in an artificial environment for God to be present. No first century Christian would have understood our practice of going off to a monastery or cloistered convent to experience a “holy” environment. Neither would they have celebrated the Lord’s Supper in the religious confines of a “church.” They lived their faith in whatever surroundings God dealt them, not waiting until they were part of an ideal, loving community before they made their move. Maybe we can relax and exhale as we await the return to our church building, and find God present in our midst.

Before moving into the Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home, listen to “Silver and Gold” which takes a line from the Acts of the Apostles:

“and Peter said, 'Silver and gold I have none, but what I have, that I give to thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and be walking.'” – Acts 3:16 (Young’s Literal Translation)

Kirk Franklin’s “Silver and Gold”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-rUmMy2zSk>

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Leader: In the name of the Father, † and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: *Amen*

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you taught that God’s reign can seem small and hidden:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you told us that God’s reign produces a bountiful yield:
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you call us to open our hearts to the gifts we are offered:
Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

God of eternal wisdom,
you alone impart the gift of right judgment.
Grant us an understanding heart,
that we may value wisely the treasure of your kingdom
and gladly forgo all lesser gifts
to possess that kingdom's incomparable joy.
We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Let the church say – Amen.

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A July 26 2020

1st Reading – 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

⁵ The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, “Ask something of me and I will give it to you.”

⁷ Solomon answered: “O LORD, my God, you have made me, your servant, king to succeed my father David; but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act

⁸ I serve you in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a people so vast that it cannot be numbered or counted.

⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?”

¹⁰ The LORD was pleased that Solomon made this request.

¹¹ So God said to him: “Because you have asked for this not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but for understanding so that you may know what is right

¹² I do as you requested. I give you a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you up to now, and after you there will come no one to equal you.”

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130

R. Lord, I love your commands.

⁵⁷ I have said, O LORD, that
my part^[L] is to keep your words.^[SEP]⁷²
The law of your mouth is to me more precious^[L]
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.^[SEP]

R. Lord, I love your commands.

⁷⁶ Let your kindness comfort me^[L]
according to your promise to your servants.^[SEP]
⁷⁷ Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.^[SEP]

R. Lord, I love your commands.

¹²⁷ For I love your command^[L]
more than gold, however fine.^[SEP]
¹²⁸ For in all your precepts I go forward;^[L]
every false way I hate.^[SEP]

R. Lord, I love your commands.

¹²⁹ Wonderful are your decrees;^[L]
therefore I observe them.^[SEP]
¹³⁰ The revelation of your words sheds light,
giving understanding to the simple.^[SEP]

R. Lord, I love your commands.

2nd Reading – Romans 8:28-30

Brothers and sisters:^[L]²⁸ We know that all things work for good for
those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.
²⁹ For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the
image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many
brothers and sisters.
³⁰ And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also
justified; and those he justified he also glorified.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God!

Alleluia – [Matthew 11:25]

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

²⁵ Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
for you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – Matthew 13:44-52

Jesus said to his disciples:

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls.

⁴⁶ When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind.

⁴⁸ When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away.

⁴⁹ Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous

⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

⁵¹ “Do you understand all these things?” They answered, “Yes.”

⁵² And he replied, “Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old.”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

Before reflecting, listen to one or both of these songs about joy:

“This Joy” – Shirley Caesar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmCYo7tX0jY>

“Joy” – Georgia Mass Choir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3jgPsGQSdQ>

Dominican theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P. stresses that “joy” is the key to our Gospel reading. We do not sell all we have with long faces or begrudgingly. It’s something we do gladly “because we have discovered something which gives meaning and centering to our lives; everything falls into place and acquires its own value when we start from the perspective of the Kingdom of God.”

1. Give thanks to the ways in which you have been surprised by joy.
2. Imagine the need to downsize your possessions. What could you give up? Visualize a vast yard sale, what would be on the tables and garment racks?
3. Or, looking at it another way, what is in your Go Bag should a hurricane, forest fire, flood, tornado or other disaster strike? What could you find it hard to live without?
4. Then imagine what intangibles in your life – relationships, habits, routines, career-paths – could be transformed, retired, abandoned, ended or blessed.
5. How could you make more room in your life for the presence of God, the reign of God, in our midst?

Before moving into intercessions, listen to this classic about change:

“Give Me a Clean Heart” – Rev. James Cleveland and the Southern California Community Choir

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GLXeqvVsQ_s

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – July 26, 2020
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Presider: My friends, the word of God leads us to wisdom, and wisdom leads us to prayer. Let us pray for those who most need our prayers.

Worship Leader

1. For those who show us the paths to peace: for missionaries, diplomats and all those who are committed to nonviolent solutions to conflict. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.** (ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Give us wisdom, O God.**)

2. For care and protection of our earthly environment. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
3. For immigrants and refugees, especially those who are fleeing violence in their countries and seeking safe sanctuary with us. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
4. For those who demonstrate God's love by caring for the poor, the vulnerable and the unloved. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
5. For the new generation of social activists, to envision new ways of ordering our society and the perseverance to bring those new forms into being. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
6. For wisdom to guide the work of the public health and medical community as well as political leaders during this pandemic. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
7. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
8. For long-term commitments by individuals and institutions to erase Racism and White Supremacy in American society through an Era of Atonement and Conversion. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
9. For all those besieged by the corona-virus, and for health care and essential workers, that they find healing and safety. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**
11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Rita Engelhardt and Viola Barthelemy Avist and for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**

12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Give us wisdom, O God.**

Presider: Loving God, hear our prayers this day and make us wise so that we may be faithful followers of your son — this week and all our lives . We ask this through Christ, our Lord. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Then sing or recite The Lord’s Prayer.

Listen to “I Know I’ve Been Changed” – LaShun Pace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3jgPsGQSdQ>

Closing Prayer

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy,
enfold us in your gracious care and mercy,
that with you as our ruler and guide,
we may use wisely the gifts of this passing world
and fix our hearts even now on those which last forever.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and
reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.
Let the Church say.....AMEN!

Close out by singing along with “Lord, Help me to Hold Out” sung by
the Detroit Mass Choir:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3jgPsGQSdQ>