

Living the Word: Romans 8: 28-30

The human desire to be in control of our lives and the things which touch our lives is a difficult one to suppress. We like to have a handle on everything that is going on in our lives in order not to be surprised when something occurs. This need to be prepared for any event often leads us into being nosy or gossiping in an inappropriate way. Paul's letter to the Church in Rome helps us to see that there are many occasions when we forget that God is in fact in control of what is going on. Therefore, even in times of strife and woe, we should trust that God can use whatever occurs to complete his purposes. When we feel as though we are out of control, perhaps those words of Teresa of Avila should be on our mind, urging God to work through our hands, our eyes, our feet, remembering that God's purposes are what must be fulfilled in the fulness of time.

From the Fathers:

From a sermon by Saint Peter Chrysologus, bishop.

The sacrament of Christ's incarnation

A virgin conceived, bore a son, and yet remained a virgin. This is no common occurrence, but a sign; no reason here, but God's power, for he is the cause, and not nature. It is a special event, not shared by others; it is divine, not human. Christ's birth was not necessity, but an expression of omnipotence, a sacrament of piety for the redemption of men. He who made man without generation from pure clay made man again and was born from a pure body. The hand that assumed clay to make our flesh deigned to assume a body for our salvation. That the Creator is in his creature and God is in the flesh brings dignity to man without dishonour to him who made him.

Collect:

O God, protector of those who hope in you, without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy, bestow in abundance your mercy upon us and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass in such a way as to hold fast even now to those that ever endure. 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. Amen.

30th July 2023

Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Chapter thirteen of St Matthew's Gospel is dense with parables. The Lord uses parables to communicate the great inversion of life in the Kingdom of God. Parables are telling us about God's way of working, God's way of seeing, God's priorities not ours. Parables always overturn expectations and shift perspectives. In today's Gospel, the Kingdom of God is described variously as 'a treasure hidden in a field', 'a merchant looking for fine pearls', and 'a dragnet cast into the sea'. The treasure hidden in a field teaches something about the unexpected in the everyday. Working in a field in first century Judea was the normal place of work for almost every person. This parable is about the startling reality of finding the treasure, or better still, the treasure finding you, in the everyday circumstance of life. Sometimes in the course of life, something happens that vividly and surprisingly summons us to union with God, and union with God is the highest good, union with God is precisely what is meant by 'the kingdom of God'. The reaction of the man who finds the treasure is telling; he does not simply carry on with his everyday work as is nothing remarkable had occurred, rather he goes off rejoicing, sells all he has, and buys the field in which the treasure resides. This means, his whole life is changed; its direction and orientation is converted. Nothing matters more than the treasure he has found. The cry of the Gospel to us is that we should hold nothing back and let nothing stand in the way when the treasure of union with God finds us out, and that we simply must be open to the finding it as we walk through the fields of life.

Today's Gospel: St. Matthew 13: 44-52