

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A lectionary-based session adapted from 'Breaking Open the Word of God: Resources for Using the Lectionary for Catechesis in the RCIA – Year A', edited by K.M Hinman & J.P Sinwell, Paulist Press, 1986)

Readings:

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

Romans 8:28-30

Matthew 13:44-52

Opening Prayer

Listen to 'Behold Now the Kingdom', John Michael Talbot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fb5sndufa7Y>

Pray: Father, your Scriptures ask us, 'Have you understood all this?' We respond, Lord, we understand. Help our misunderstanding.' Amen.

REFLECTING ON THE GOSPEL

Read today's Gospel; Matthew 13:44-52

Take time to consider the following questions then journal/share your responses

- Ever since the time of David there has been talk of the kingdom. What is unique about the message of the kingdom Jesus brings? What does this Gospel tell us about this?
- How would you explain the kingdom of God to an unbeliever?
- What does this parable tell you about the priorities in your life?
- Take each of the parables in this week's Gospel and write a one sentence 'lesson' for each one. (What is the point of each?)

Looking at a Gospel theme

What is the kingdom of God?

1. Read Mark 4:30-32. It is a re-statement of Matthew 13:31-33 – What is the kingdom of God like?
 - a. Reflect/share on the symbol of the bird nesting in the passages. It is also used in Daniel 4:12 and Ezekiel 17:22-23, 31:6. It represents the concept of a great empire embracing all peoples.
 - b. God reigns over all, but to 'belong' to the kingdom we must experience interior change. (Matthew 13:44-45: We must uncover the 'hidden treasure' and 'find the pearl'.
2. What is interior conversion?
 - a. Reflect/share on the Gospel. What did the man do when he uncovered the treasure, when he found the pearl? Why?
 - b. Reflect/share/journal on a personal story of 'uncovering the treasure' in your own life. What happened as a result? In particular recall what sacrifices and changes you were called to make.
3. To belong to the kingdom, we must submit and commit.
 - a. When we submit we offer ourselves, and show our willingness to be guided by God.
 - b. When we commit we give ourselves wholly to obedience to the commandment to 'love one another'. (John 13:34)
 - We commit to follow in Christ's footsteps.
 - The Beatitudes provide us with a description of what we should strive for (Matthew 3:3-12).

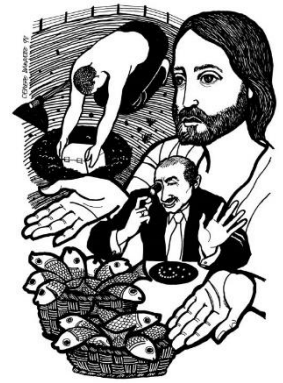


Illustration Cerezo Barredo,
servicioskoinonia.org/cerezo

4. 'Thy Kingdom Come'

- a. Those who belong to the kingdom on earth work to extend it to all people through prayer, study and example.
- b. The kingdom is here and now. But it will only come to completion in heaven

Some questions to consider.

Share or journal your responses

1. How was the kingdom of God most evident to you today? Was there a time this week when you resisted belonging to the kingdom? How can you respond differently next week?
2. Jesus asked the question: 'Have you understood all this?' Parables have always been one of the most puzzling parts of Scripture. How could we answer a confident 'Yes' to Jesus' question? Perhaps we could answer this one better: Do you believe that which you do understand? Are you prepared to act on this understanding? What does this section of Scripture demand of me at this time?

CLOSING PRAYER

Listen to, and pray with 'Where your treasure is' by Marty Haugen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgvE4-PwfhA>