

# The Wisdom of the 'Finders'

*This Week's Readings at Mass*

- ▶ 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12 - Wisdom of Solomon
- ▶ Romans 8:28-30 - God's love for all
- ▶ Matthew 13:44-46 - The treasure and the pearl

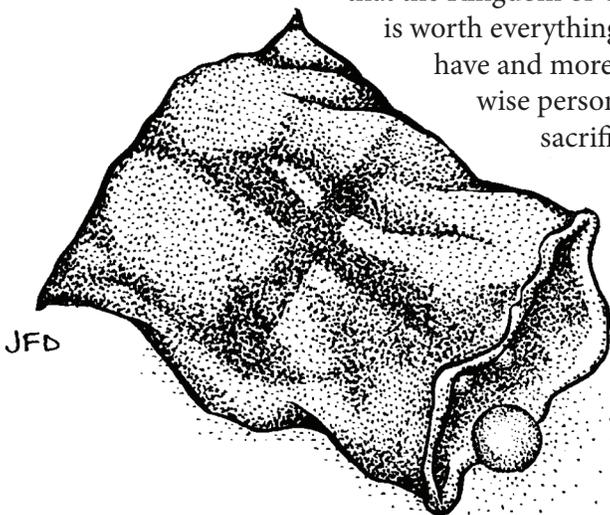


Today's Gospel reading is a continuation of Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God, described through several parables. When we first hear the parable of the man who buys a field with a hidden treasure, we may wonder about his ethics. Isn't he, in effect, stealing the wealth from the previous owner? In Palestine, during this period, it was common for people to bury their valuables to protect them, especially in times of war. If they weren't able to recover them later, others would benefit from them. Rabbis debated who was entitled to the treasure when it was found. The parable here assumes the finder, rather than the field's previous owner, is entitled to it.

In the second parable, "the pearl of great price," the finder was actively seeking something valuable rather than stumbling upon it like the person who found the treasure in the field. Finally, in the third parable, the fishermen are looking for what is good and throwing away what doesn't serve them.

All three parables emphasize the value of what is found and the focused response of the "finders," whether the person was actively seeking a treasure or stumbled upon it.

The point Jesus is making is that the Kingdom of God is worth everything we have and more. A wise person will sacrifice any-



thing and everything to acquire the Kingdom. What we receive in return will far surpass what we have to give up or renounce.

The passage ends with Jesus pointing out to the disciples that there is treasure in both old and new teachings. The old teachings are the Hebrew Scriptures (aka the Old Testament), and the new teachings are from Jesus' life. Jesus doesn't surpass the old, but he upholds the wisdom found there, even while he re-interprets some of the Jewish laws.

## Questions of the Week

- 1 When have you sold/given up something valuable so that you could attain something more worthwhile? (This could be a possession, a job, a relationship, etc.)
- 2 Think of some "old" treasure of faith (perhaps a Bible verse, a scripture story, some wisdom from a parent or elder) that you still hang onto. Think of some new wisdom or insight that helps you in your faith life now. Please share these old and new treasures.