

17th Sunday of the Year A

**First Reading** 1 Kings 3:5,7-12

At Gibeon the Lord appeared in a dream to Solomon during the night. God said, "Ask what you would like me to give you." Solomon replied, "Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its numbers cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. "Since you have asked for this," the Lord said, "and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you."

**Second Reading** Romans 8:28-30

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

**Gospel** Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus said to his disciples, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it."

**Meditation**

The success of casinos and state lotteries is a witness to our hope that somehow we might strike it rich without effort. The chance of a lifetime, the unhopd for occasion, is to discover in Jesus the kingdom of heaven. In order to attain that treasure we must take the risk of a speculator and sell all that we have in order to buy that which holds the promise of greater wealth. Woe to those who label as foolishness that which is profound wisdom, the ability to appreciate and search for real wealth. "Ask yourself", says Newman, "if the Kingdom would disappear, would you change anything in your life? If you see nothing that you would change, it is because you have risked nothing for Christ and the Kingdom". A life risked for Christ and the kingdom is the demand made by baptism. Social, professional, and even family life, are lived within parameters. Only the Christian life is an absolute. The passion for Christ must submerge all other controlling factors in our lives.

For the one who wishes to follow Christ must sell all, refusing to tolerate the least measure of hypocrisy or compromise. Selling all for Christ does not denigrate freedom. Sacrifice and detachment are the necessary consequences of attachment to Jesus in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. More than any great cause, Jesus excites within us great joy, all the joy of the world: the joy of the world: the joy of discovering the meaning of life, the joy of finding ourselves engaged in the adventure of holiness.