

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jul 27th 2014

As I read my assigned readings for this reflection, I secretly groaned. Parables. Why do I have to reflect on parables? A good spiritual director might ask “What is your resistance to reflecting on parables?” Mine is this: they are either so explicit that I wonder why Jesus didn’t just say what he meant or they are so convoluted that I wonder why Jesus just didn’t say what he meant. This frustrates me and I am off wandering down a road that goes in a different direction than the parables lead. So, as I read about the kingdom of heaven being like a treasure, a merchant and a net, nothing remotely insightful was coming to the surface. I approached the scripture from different angles: What is the kingdom? Are these nouns or verbs? Is Jesus trying to say that we are precious? I also went to my Catholic Youth Bible. Sometimes the explanations I find there are about my speed. You get the idea, I hope. I also went back to the beginning of the Matthew, Chapter 13, and started looking at footnotes.

This is where my thread started to emerge. Matthew 13:10, 11 tells us that knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom is a gift. Understanding is a gift from God. Here is a link to our first reading about Solomon requesting an understanding heart and God is the one who granted it.

So, after all this, what do I want to say? I want to say that the kingdom of heaven is something we seek and have joy around when we find it. The kingdom of heaven is something we search for; it is priceless. The kingdom of heaven is an action of collecting and sorting. I want to say that the kingdom of heaven is present in the ministry of Jesus. It is present today in our ministry to one another, the environment, the world. I want to say that understanding exactly what this means is a gift from God and that maybe the invitation is to relish the mystery, divinity, bigness of God and the kingdom.

Just one more thought, from the Catholic Youth Bible. “In trying to get people to understand something as mystifying as the kingdom of heaven, Jesus used ordinary objects like seeds and light, salt and yeast. He chose everyday actions like farming, fishing, and baking. And in doing so, he helped the people of his time understand the new life that comes with the kingdom of heaven.”

What is the kingdom to you? Take a walk outside, or look around the room you are in right now. Pick any object that catches your attention. Try to imagine how Jesus, the master teacher, would use that object to describe the kingdom of heaven. For example, he might say: “The kingdom of heaven is like this telephone. It connects you to everyone else in the world no matter who or where they are.” End your meditation with a prayer that your life will be a living sign to help others understand what the kingdom of heaven is all about.

The kingdom of heaven is like the curtains in my office. They shield me from things that are too bright, while letting just the right amount of energy in.

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