

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

- The first image...
 - that Jesus uses to describe the Kingdom of Heaven...
 - that of the field with the buried treasure...
 - that's what stood out in my prayer...
 - especially the notion of paying for the land.
 - The Lord then took me to another piece of property...
 - that was also purchased in the Gospels...
 - The potters field.
 - If you remember...
 - that was purchased with the money...
 - that Judas refused to take...because of his shame.
 - From there...
 - the Lord showed me how a number of things in our readings...
 - line up quite nicely with the story of Judas...
 - but with a completely different outcome.
 - I'll mention another one.
- Judas went to the Chief priests and asked this question:
 - *"What are you willing to give me if I hand him over?"*
 - Notice how...he's the one asking the question...
 - and it is oh so very self-centered...
 - he's basically saying: *'what's in it for me'*
- But in our First reading...
 - it's the Lord who's inviting Solomon:
 - *"Ask something of me and I will give it."*
 - Whatever you want...just ask...it'll be yours.
 - Solomon could've been just as self-centered as Judas...
 - but he wasn't.
 - Instead...
 - the Lord's generosity...in asking the question...
 - inspired generosity...in Solomon's answer.
 - He basically thought to himself:
 - *"What can I get from the Lord...that would benefit them."*
 - He was thinking of his people.
 - That's at the heart of the Kingdom of Heaven isn't it?
 - It's all about putting others first...
 - it's about selfless love...
 - about laying down our life...
 - and sacrificing for them.
 - We obviously see this with Solomon and Jesus...
 - but Judas is completely turned in on self.

- So...applying all of that to us...What does your prayer...typically look like?
 - Are you more like Judas?
 - Or are you more like Solomon?
 - Are you focused on what you need?
 - Or are you focused on the needs of others?
 - I'm sure we all do a bit of both right?
- In thinking about my own prayer...
 - I suddenly had an interesting thought:
 - Should we ever be focused on ourselves in prayer?
 - The conclusion I came to is 'no' but bear with me here.
 - Because the Lord also reminded me of some words that He taught me to pray...
 - when something is really important.
 - The words are these:
 - *"For the sake of the salvation of the souls in my care..."*
 - and then I ask for what's needed.
 - *For the sake of the salvation of the souls in my care...*
 - Lord I beg you...make me more patient...more loving
 - *For the sake of the salvation of the souls in my care...*
 - heal this wound in my heart...
 - help me to get over this one particular sin.
 - *For the sake of the salvation of the souls in my care...*
 - make me a better priest, pastor and shepherd...
 - because my people...Lord, they need a good priest.
 - Or if it is you...
 - make me a good parent...a better spouse...a much closer friend
 - because they need me to be.
- That's a prayer...that's for ourselves...but really it's focused on others.
 - Like Solomon...
 - God's gifts that are given to us...
 - are meant to benefit other souls.
- So I ask you to join me in praying that way...and let me know the results.
 - Because I think it will teach us...
 - what we really need to be praying for...
 - because it doesn't always work...
 - *For the sake of the salvation of the souls in my care...*
 - Lord I beg you...give me some donuts!
 - Doesn't work right?!?!?
 - Well...maybe if we share!
 - But this does work:
 - please Lord...give me a job...my family needs food.
- So try it out...
 - because I think it will keep our prayers focused on others...
 - and better build up God's Kingdom...right here in our midst.