

Treasure in a Field – Gospel Reflection for Sunday 27th July - 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Rosemary O'Connor & Patrick Sullivan

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus tells his disciples of a man who finds a treasure hidden in a field; he is so pleased to have found this treasure that he sells everything he owns to buy the field. Jesus uses the analogy of treasure hidden in a field to explain the kingdom of heaven. If we can seek and find the kingdom of heaven we too will be filled with great joy and be happy to give up everything to achieve it.

God's Kingdom in Heaven and here on Earth

In the Our Father we pray "...thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven..." As Christians we are constantly searching for the kingdom of God – God's presence here on earth. In this sense we are treasure-seekers. God does not always show us the full beauty of the treasure of His kingdom at once – it is revealed to us little by little - we get glimpses of God's presence here and there in our lives which encourages us to search further. We can reveal the beauty of God's kingdom to others through our faith, love and hope. The more we can do this the more of God's kingdom that is revealed to us.

What is our treasure?

This Gospel passage invites us to pause and consider what we regard as treasure in our own lives; what is really important to us in our heart of hearts? We can focus a lot of energy and resources in acquiring possessions – in many cases when we finally get something we have been waiting and waiting for we might find it leaves us feeling a little empty. In times of crisis such as ill health or loss we might find that the things we thought were really important to us are actually not that important at all.

Where will we find our treasure?

So where will we find our treasure?; the Gospel story makes it clear that we need to search for our treasure; in the parable the man found the treasure in a field – it was there all the time but it was hidden. Jesus was constantly challenging people to see and see again in order to understand anew. Our treasure may be close to us too but we may not recognise it – we need to see with new eyes and hear with new ears – we need to keep searching. We need to look beyond the surface of the field to get to the treasure.

Joseph Campbell wrote: *“It is by going down into the abyss that we recover the treasures of life. Where you stumble, there lies your treasure.”*

Finding treasure in the ordinary

The Gospel makes it clear that we will need to give something up in order to get the treasure; one of the first things we might have to give up is our idea of what treasure is. Most treasure is right under our noses – it is in the people we meet, the challenges we encounter, the opportunities we are presented with – we may not immediately recognise it wrapped up in the ordinary stuff of life.

Paulo Coehlo said: *“Remember that wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure. You’ve got to find the treasure, so that everything you have learned along the way can make sense.”*

Our invitation in this Gospel is to see beyond the surface, to continuously dig deeper to uncover God’s presence in the ordinary situations in life. By bearing witness to God’s love with those we encounter we can make our contribution to the realisation of God’s kingdom here on earth.