

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – July 26, 2026 Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

The LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said, "Ask something of me and I will give it to you." Solomon answered: "O LORD, my God, you have made me, your servant, king to succeed my father David; but I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act. I serve you in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a people so vast that it cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge your people and to distinguish right from wrong. For who is able to govern this vast people of yours?"

The LORD was pleased that Solomon made this request. So God said to him: "Because you have asked for this—not for a long life for yourself, nor for riches, nor for the life of your enemies, but for understanding so that you may know what is right—I do as you requested. I give you a heart so wise and understanding that there has never been anyone like you up to now, and after you there will come no one to equal you."

Psalms 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130

R. (97a) Lord, I love your commands.

I have said, O Lord, that my part
is to keep your words.
The law of your mouth is to me more precious
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

Let your kindness comfort me
according to your promise to your servants.
Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

For I love your commands
more than gold, however fine.
For in all your precepts I go forward;
every false way I hate.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

Wonderful are your decrees;
therefore I observe them.
The revelation of your words sheds light,
giving understanding to the simple.

R. Lord, I love your commands.

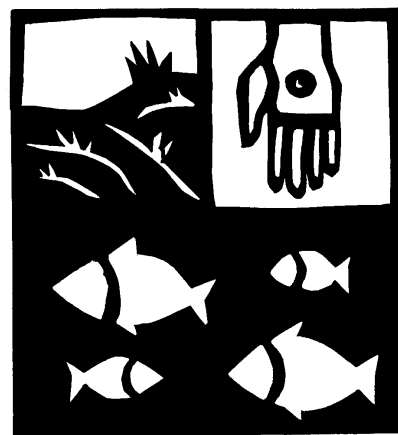
Scripture Reading: Romans 8:28-30

Brothers and sisters: We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collects fish of every kind. When it is full they haul it ashore and sit down to put what is good into buckets. What is bad they throw away. Thus it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.

"Do you understand all these things?" They answered, "Yes." And he replied, "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old."



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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Look at the many different depths and types of wisdom in the world, and thus in this Sunday's Mass. Here is an everyday example. I remember a cartoon in the New Yorker magazine years ago that etched itself in my mind. A terribly decrepit old man is sitting on his front porch while a very beautiful woman walks by on the sidewalk. His mouth is hanging open. George Booth was the cartoonist, so of course there is one of his terrible flea-bitten dogs at the man's feet. His equally haggard wife is at the door, with the screen pushed open just far enough to take in this scene. She says to him, "Well whistle, you damn fool!" I suppose I had expected her to load guilt on the leering old man in his act of leering. Instead, Booth gave us what are really just words of everyday common sense. "Don't just sit there: at least do what every other heterosexual male in the world would do." So. Wisdom comes in many flavors, and there is a kind of common, real acumen in the old lady's words. Now, let us examine Sunday's readings for different types of wisdom. In the Gospel, Jesus uses the common sense kind. He says, if you went out into a field and saw a suspicious mound of earth, and you happened to dig it up, and you found there a hidden treasure—as much gold as you could ever want—would you immediately go and tell everyone about it? Of course not. It is like "Well whistle, you damn fool!" Common sense says you would re-bury the treasure, disguising it perfectly, and then go sell all your property and come buy the field. Now the treasure is yours. "Look at what I found on my new property!"

It is an excellent example. It makes sense. Well then, Jesus asks, wouldn't you do as much for the kingdom of heaven? He has suddenly deepened the wisdom! And in the First Reading, Solomon uses another flavor of wisdom. He asks not for selfish gifts, but for an understanding heart so that he can rule God's people. This request moves God. He gives Solomon great practical wisdom in order that he might succeed as King. And other gifts as well. Perhaps the deepest wisdom this Sunday is in the Second Reading. You and I have undoubtedly quoted these words, not remembering where they came from, "All things work for the good [of] those who love God." The older I get, the more true this seems. Even when darkness and loss become our daily bread, still the love of God labors incessantly to bring out greater forgiveness, larger love, more acceptance of life and love, even within pain. This is the wisest understanding that can be. Sunday at Mass we can pay attention to any of these varieties of wisdom. The important thing is not to just sit there and gape, but to do what every other human being in the world would do if given a glimpse into the kingdom. Listen to God's love, you sleepyhead!

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. "Understanding" or "shema" in Hebrew means listening or obedient. How would race relations, immigration problems, climate crises and wars change if leaders in the world earnestly prayed Solomon's prayer, "Give your servant, therefore, an understanding heart"? What impact might "listening" have on good leadership?
2. The New American Bible translation is "all things work together for those who love God." In what ways have you seen examples of this? People figuring out new ways to solve problems? People stepping up to serve others in need? Have you experienced it in your own life that everything works out when you love God?
3. How are "getting" and "giving" related when speaking of "the hidden treasure" and "the pearl of great price?"

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. This should be your primary consideration. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations. The following are secondary suggestions.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

O God, who through the grace of adoption chose us to be children of light, grant, we pray, that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen