

Reflection from the Gospel of Matthew 13:44-52
17th Sunday of Ordinary Time
Asia

Priceless Pearl

Seventeen years ago, January 2003 to be exact when I started seriously searching *“the real treasure – my priceless pearl.”* I remember the motions I had within...my heart longs for something that I cannot find outside (in the world, in my work, even in my day to day). It was a desire that seeks deeper meaning in life, a joy that does not depend on achievements and possessions. It was a profound yearning within to seek God’s will, to know His plans, to love and serve Him concretely.

When I became conscious of that ardent desire within, I began listening to those voices attentively that shout out constantly *“seek the will of God and know his plans; there you will find life meaning and experience real joy.”* But what must I do? Where do I need to go? How to find this treasure – my priceless pearl? Those are the questions I had back then. Since I was only 23 that time, I do not have much recourse in life. The only way I know was to pray. So, in every encounter I had with God in prayer, I always asked Him to be my guide and to show me the way...

In today’s Gospel Jesus speaks to us in parables comparing the Kingdom of God to 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. And the other 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. (cf. Mt. 13:44-46)

The parables question us on what is truly valuable and important for us? Do we focus and direct all our attention in finding the real treasure; the Kingdom of God, to know and to possess God, to seek His will, to love and serve Him concretely? In the Gospel of St. Luke 12:34 tells us “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”

After a year of seeking Him continuously in the ordinariness of life, finding my priceless pearl, God awakened the treasure buried inside my heart. He directed my path to show the plan He has for me... (He called me to be a missionary, to dedicate one’s life, to love and serve my brothers and sisters concretely). He made me realize that He is the only treasure that can satiate and satisfy my being and if my heart loves something else, it is lost. (cf. L88.6) Receiving that grace of finding what is valuable truly has changed my life. It is very true that when you find the treasure or the pearl of great price, out of joy you’ll live everything behind in exchange to the treasure you found. And that’s what happened to me... finding God, desiring to know Him deeply, to discover the plan he has for me and to follow His will then and now is the treasure I claim my own. This desire, this

reality, and this grace I consider as my priceless pearl. That no matter how much it takes the cost either in the ups and downs of life, in moments of darkness and light... I/we may always sincerely seek God and his Kingdom.

And I would like to end it with a song "Earthen Vessels" that says:

We hold a treasure, not made of gold

In earthen vessels wealth untold

One treasure only, the Lord

The Christ in earthen vessels.

Carmelita misionera teresiana - Asia