



## SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - YEAR A

Dear Priests, Deacons, Brothers and Sisters

The Word of God in the readings for this 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time is quite significant at this time in the world and for each one of us dealing with the challenges of Covid-19.

The question that the Word of God is asking of us is, what are the things that are really important and matter to us in life? The one I think that stands out is the gift of life with the threat of the Coronavirus seeing so many succumb to the virus and die. A second one is to have the comforts of life been able to live comfortably. A third could be to have worldly riches. All of these focus on what matters for us.

The reading from the first book of Kings turns our minds to King Solomon who is offered to ask for whatever he wishes by God. His answer is pleasing to God for it does not focus on himself but on the gift to lead God's People with a discerning heart as to what is good and evil. This request was what really mattered for Solomon. A request we should be looking for. A request the leaders of our time need-so much with so much corruption in our world. God grants Solomon the gift of Wisdom to discern what really matters in his role of leadership.

A gift of the Holy Spirit we should ask for on our journey of faith and so necessary in the temptations that come our Way each day. That we may use the gift of wisdom to help us to choose good in responding to the call to grow in holiness.

The Psalm directs us in the light of asking God for what really matters. The Lord is my portion... the teaching of your lips is better for me than thousands of gold and silver. May your steadfast love be my comfort'.

St Paul's Letter to the Romans is of God's intention and plan for our lives 'For those who love God, all works for the good. Those God has called and have formed their lives in the likeness of his Son. These are the ones he justified'. God has called each one of us in baptism and justified us through Christ's death and resurrection. Are we living God's Plan for our lives? Seeking the good and putting aside the sinful/evil things.

The Gospel returns to Matthew's theme of parables. What we notice and matters for Jesus is the kingdom of God. The treasure in the field, the pearl of great price and the fishermen's dragnet are parables relating to our Christian lives.

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What really matters. How do we seek the things that would lead us to the kingdom of God? Is our focus on the material things? The field that holds treasure; The pearl of great value or the sorting out of the things that are of value that lead us to the kingdom of God.

Throwing away the things that are of no use. Jesus asks the same question he put to his disciples have we understood his three parables? If yes we pray that through the Holy Spirit we may understand what really matters in our lives with minds, as to what God thinks about the things that really matter.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Peter Holiday