

July 30, 2023



AN UNDERSTANDING HEART

By Sr. Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

From Today's First Reading and Gospel

*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."

1 KINGS 3:5, 7-12

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."

MATTHEW 13:44-46

Reflection

Today's first reading is the beginning of the account of King Solomon's reign. At this time in the history of Israel, dreams were one of the ways God communicated with the chosen people. In this first appearance to Solomon, God showed favor to Solomon, son of David, by inviting him to request whatever he desired, and it would be granted. Drawing from the conversation in the dream, it is clear that Solomon also had great love and reverence for God. He simply asked for an understanding heart so he would be able to govern God's people well; he wanted to be able to listen and discern how to exercise leadership according to God's heart. And this he received—a listening heart full of wisdom and discernment. Throughout the ages, the wisdom of Solomon resounded among the people he governed. He built a beautiful Temple for God—a fitting place for the Holy One to dwell on earth, among God's own beloved people.

In today's Gospel reading from Matthew, we hear Jesus, the wisdom of God, speaking in parables to the people of his time. In Matthew, Jesus was sometimes compared to Moses. Jesus was also thought of as the *shekhinah*, the physical manifestation of the divine presence. Jesus replaces the Temple—the divine presence abides within him and from his mouth flows the wisdom of God. The two kingdom parables mentioned in today's reading, the hidden treasure and the fine pearl, focus on the need to discern the worth of the precious discovery and, if it is valuable enough, to sell everything to obtain it. A wise person would gladly give all to receive the gift of the kingdom of heaven.



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For Pondering

Young King Solomon realized that God had created him and designed that he would follow in his father's royal line. He humbly asked for a discerning, listening heart so he could follow God's will as he governed. How would you respond if God offered you *anything you desire*?

- Would it be spiritual gifts of wisdom and discernment?
- Would you request security and material stability?
- Would you ask for insight into the mysteries of God's amazing creation?
- Would you seek the gift of awakening God's immense love for you?
- What 'hidden treasure' or 'pearl of great value' have you discovered and for which you desire to give up everything to obtain?

For Prayer

Jesus Christ has invited us to ask our gracious God for what we desire. This is the moment to make your request known to God who loves you extravagantly.

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