

Wednesday of the 17th Week of Ordinary Time (B)

Homily of Bishop Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

July 28, 2021

The 13th Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a treasure buried in a field and a pearl of great price.

Both the person who finds the treasure and the merchant searching for the fine pearl sell everything they have to acquire the treasure and to acquire the pearl of great price.

As we pray this short Gospel passage this morning, we ask for the grace to give ourselves totally to Jesus Christ, our greatest treasure.

We ask for the grace to give ourselves totally to Christ so that we can be instruments of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

When we follow the logic of the treasure and the pearl of great price in Matthew 13, when we live completely in Christ, our faces are radiant with Christ, radiant with peace and radiant with faith.

The Book of Exodus Chapter 34 reads: “As Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the commandments in his hands, he did not know that the skin of his face had become radiant while he conversed with the Lord.”

All the great saints of our Church follow in the footsteps of Moses’ powerful intimacy with God and the radiance of that intimacy.

The mystic missionaries carry and energize the Church in history. They are radiant and ecstatic in the way they exist and in the way they live and radiate Christ to the world. They give themselves totally to Christ and they radiate his powerful presence. They live Matthew 13 and Exodus 34 profoundly.

Next Wednesday, August 4th, we will celebrate the Memorial of St. John Vianney, the holy Cure of Ars, and the Patron of Catholic priests.

In an excerpt from his catechetical instructions from the Liturgy of the Hours for his Memorial on August 4, he shows how total commitment to Christ radiates through us in our total commitment to prayer.

He writes: “Prayer is nothing else but union with God. When one has a heart that is pure and united with God, he is given a kind of serenity and sweetness that makes him ecstatic, a light that surrounds him with marvelous brightness. In this intimate union, God and the soul are fused together like two bits of wax that no one can ever pull apart. This union of God with a tiny creature is a lovely thing. It is a happiness beyond understanding.”