

FROM THE PASTOR'S PRINTER

OK, SO I WAS WRONG! (IT WON'T BE THE LAST TIME, I'M SURE.)

If you are wondering how the new front steps to church are proceeding, they aren't - because I misunderstood the time line. August is the month when they will begin work.

TREASURE HUNTING

I do not know about you, but when there is something I really like and I lose it, searching for it does not become an activity; it becomes a quest. I will search and rack my jumbled brain trying to find it, call any place I might have been with it, go back, and look in places I have already looked (as if the lost object has legs). Sometimes it is an object that could easily be replaced, but I want MINE back. I am sure there is a psychological term for such behavior, but I will settle on crazy.

There are, though, things that are worth all that kind of effort, and primary among them is the kingdom of heaven, or in other words, the kingdom of God.

To begin with, let's look at what we mean by the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is not a physical place here on earth nor in the farthest heavens. Jesus tells us, "The kingdom of God is in your midst [or within you]." (Lk 17: 21) The kingdom of God is a state of being with, in, for, and through God. The kingdom is the grace – life – love – being – work – of the Trinity happening for us. The kingdom is wherever TRUE goodness, love, integrity (i.e., wholeness), and grace occur. The kingdom of God is wherever the surrender of our hearts to God as the acceptance of His gift of grace happens. This does not mean that the kingdom is fully unfolded in any one of our earthly events, but that we are drawn into the Kingdom by the acceptance of God's grace and obedience to his will. The kingdom is not always beautiful in this world's eyes. Its beauty is not always found in the world's concepts of happiness (i.e., immediate satisfaction, or what's in it for me?" sacrifice is at best a

necessary evil), but in the beauty of self-giving for the sake of others, letting go of immediate fulfillment for eternal fulfillment, embracing the ugly (often seen as those who do not fit our categories of success), so that the beauty of God's love can shine forth. The kingdom of heaven occurs whenever we become more like God in love and truth.

In today's gospel, we hear about merchants and treasure hunters and what they do to achieve their treasure. They sell everything to have the gold or the pearl. The words of Christ are indeed true: "Where your treasure lies, there is your heart." (Mt 6:21) We see this at work in the world to this day; people who put everything behind their dream. They live and breathe their treasured goal. No hobby, relationship, or value is above their treasured dream. Jesus calls us to have the same intensity about living in his kingdom. Nothing can be allowed to stand in its way. The difference between the treasure of the kingdom, and the treasures of our own making is that when we embrace the kingdom of God, we do not put others behind it; we incorporate them into the kingdom. To forsake all that is alien to the kingdom of heaven really brings us to embrace much more than what we have lost. Seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things will be given you. Prioritize your values in light of the kingdom, and do not be afraid to let go of what keeps you from the fullness of life in the kingdom of heaven.

*The kingdom of God is justice and peace
and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

NOTE FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION: Because of the need of the church for school orientation, **THERE WILL BE NO EVENING MASS ON AUGUST 14th** for the feast of the ASSUMPTION. There will be Mass at 7 AM, NOON, & 7 PM on Wednesday, August 15th.