

1. A couple of days ago, I was listening to an interview with a former Swiss Guard who is now a business professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. about his time of protecting Pope Saint John Paul II. The gentleman's name is Andreas Widmer and he wrote a book entitled: The Pope and the CEO. During the interview he spoke about his time after his service and his success in business but also the emptiness he experienced when success and failure got the best of him. It was during this point that he realized that he had placing his time and energy into something that was not bringing him or his family closer to God. The story of Solomon's prayer leads us to reflect on what we pray for and should lead us to what we truly need in order for us to deepen our relationship with God. His first thought is the welfare of God's Kingdom and in order to rule it according to God's law, he must have wisdom to do so.
2. I often say that we need things in our life that even us out and we call these things hobbies. Some will do woodworking projects, some will tend their garden, some will read books. Anything that we do should be life giving, not only to us, but to those around us as well. Today we conclude reading from Matthew 13 which we have been hearing from for the past three weekends and the parables about the kingdom of heaven which include the sower and the seed, the weeds and the wheat, and now the parable of the treasure buried in the field, the pearl of great price, and the catch of fish. Each of these parables furthers our understanding of what we must do so that we can attain God's gift of eternal life.
3. I am not a big fan of hypothetical questions but it is sometimes how we think. A common question is if your house was on fire and you got to save one thing besides your family, what would you save? We should think about this hypothetical situation as well: if we were to be called back to the Father today, would we be comfortable with how we would be judged? Does my life exhibit a life of faith in God and love of God and neighbor? Am I a person who finds so great a treasure as eternal life in heaven to pursue it? A merchant in something expensive should know what is remarkable and what is mediocre and what is worth pursuing. An analogy for us is that when a farmer seeks out land that has great potential to grow crops, they will do what they can to acquire that land. The difference between giving into the temptation to greed and investing in one's future and the opportunity to provide for one's family is what makes the difference.

Another way to look at this is this question: when we pursue something, what do we hope to gain from it?

4. The prayers that we pray during Mass are not just randomly chosen or composed to sound nice but they serve a purpose of directing us towards God. The opening prayer that we prayed at the beginning of Mass asked that with God as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass/ in such a way as to hold fast even now/ to those that ever endure. To sum this up quickly, the things we use and consume in this life should not be our sole focus but should bring us to reflect on who gave them to us: namely God. Another way to think about this is that if we look at an image of Jesus, say Da Vinci's Last Supper it should lead us to reflect on the greater mystery of the events of the Last Supper such as the washing of the apostle's feet and the first Mass. The Prayer over the offerings that will be prayed during this Mass will remind us that: "these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our present way of life and lead us to eternal gladness." Lastly at the end of Mass today, we will pray: "that this gift [the Eucharist] which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation."
5. We must remember that Jesus' parables are meant to give us a model of living as one of his disciples. In order for us to do this, we must be like Solomon who has the big picture in mind and the most important part of human existence: getting to heaven. To see this lived out in Jesus' life is the prayer he makes in the Garden of Gethsemane before he is taken into custody after the Last Supper. My prayer for you and myself is so that we can echo Jesus' prayer: "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."