

The Living Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

26 July 2026

First Reading 1 Kgs 3:5.7-12

You have asked for wisdom.

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its numbers cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this' the Lord said 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 118:57. 72. 76-77. 127-130. R. v.97

(R.) Lord, I love your commands.

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord,
is to obey your word.
The law from your mouth means more
to me
than silver and gold. (R.)
2. Let your love be ready to console me
by your promise to your servant.
Let your love come to me and I shall live
for your law is my delight. (R.)
3. That is why I love your commands
more than finest gold.
That is why I rule my life by your
precepts:
I hate false ways. (R.)
4. Your will is wonderful indeed;
therefore I obey it.
The unfolding of your word gives light
and teaches the simple. (R.)

Second Reading Rom 8:28-30

He predestined us to become true images of his Son.

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to

become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

Gospel Acclamation See Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are you, Father,

Lord of heaven and earth;

**you have revealed to little ones the
mysteries of the kingdom.**

Alleluia!

Gospel Mt 13:44-52

(or shorter form Mt 13:44-46)

He sells everything he owns and buys the field.

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well, then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'



Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

A burning rubbish tip in Jerusalem (Gehenna) provided Jesus with one image of Hell. Here is St John Henry Newman's image of Hell.

Have you travelled to a foreign country and can't speak the language? There would be lots of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What if you were born with a good ear for languages, but had deliberately never learnt the language of that other place? You would only have yourself to blame. It would be a living hell.

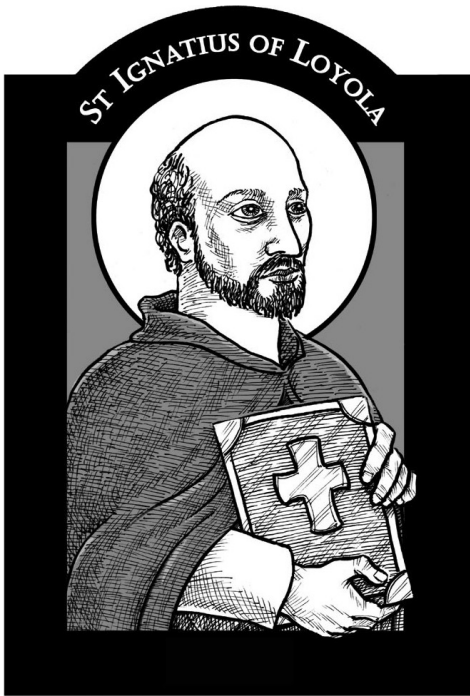
That is what happens at death. The soul is suddenly transported to a different dimension of existence, and it can be either heavenly or hellish depending on the choices and actions of a lifetime.

So, our lifetime project is to 'learn the language of heaven'. We can mainly do this by following the story of Jesus, the Word of God, the perfect conversation between humanity and God.

We could pause for a moment to move from incommunicado to communion by learning and practising the language of Heaven.

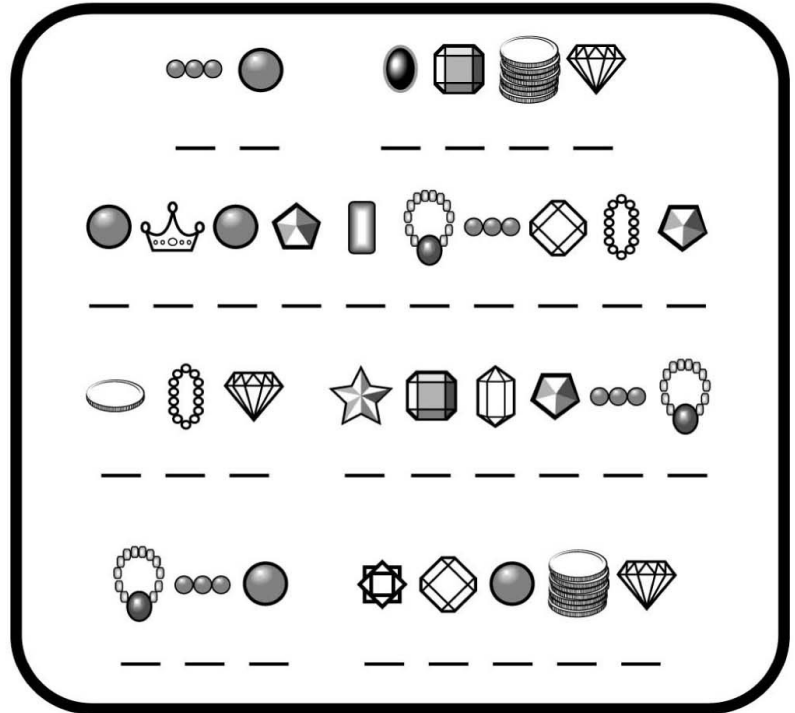
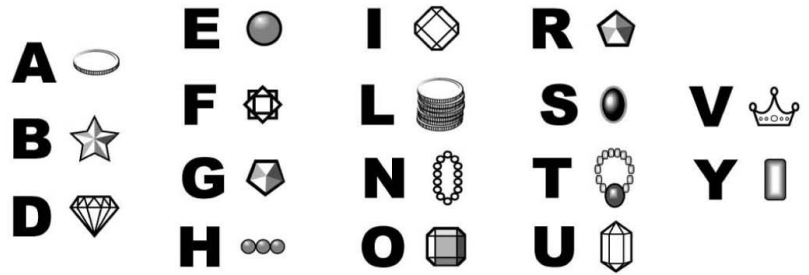
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St Ignatius of Loyola was born the youngest son of a Basque noble family. As a young soldier he fought against the French army and eventually sustained a crippling leg injury. During his long recovery, he read books about the life of Christ and the saints and was duly converted. After a pilgrimage to Jerusalem he went to study in France, where he also did evangelical work as a layman. Together with a small group of followers, Ignatius offered his services to the Pope. They were ordained as priests and in 1540 the Pope gave formal approval to their religious order known as the Society of Jesus. Ignatius remained in Rome as the head of the Jesuits which grew to over one thousand members at the time of his death in 1556.

What did the man do after he found the treasure hidden in the field? Use the key below to decipher the code.



Wordsearch

Try to find these words:



buy
field
find
happy
heaven
hidden
kingdom
one
pearl
sell
shop
treasure

M	E	D	K	Z	M	G	E	Y	M	H	E	Y	I	Z	H	A
S	D	I	J	W	Y	T	L	K	U	U	J	X	U	J	J	T
A	J	U	T	T	U	V	Z	P	T	A	Q	P	O	T	Y	E
T	O	M	L	A	S	L	L	R	A	E	P	A	M	U	B	N
Y	V	H	L	S	H	D	J	L	T	A	Y	O	B	P	K	O
J	J	H	V	D	M	U	T	Z	M	F	X	A	T	U	U	O
C	F	U	L	D	N	G	Y	M	K	I	N	G	D	O	M	X
T	E	Y	G	Z	N	F	S	C	F	H	S	L	T	F	H	O
R	R	O	E	E	S	H	I	B	L	E	W	K	U	A	R	S
N	Q	E	D	P	G	G	G	N	L	A	B	W	P	X	Y	G
X	Y	D	A	M	Q	L	H	L	D	V	L	P	J	C	Q	B
Q	I	Z	Y	S	W	A	E	T	D	E	Y	Q	A	D	S	K
H	U	N	K	I	U	W	L	L	A	N	Y	V	U	Y	X	W
G	O	N	D	E	W	R	E	I	Q	T	Y	S	E	I	F	D
K	X	Z	B	S	C	I	E	V	X	D	P	D	R	E	N	Q
V	A	V	F	W	F	B	O	I	P	Z	V	P	T	V	I	H
R	V	K	L	Z	C	Y	E	M	P	O	H	S	K	G	O	O