

Searching for the Kingdom of God



Jesus tells two short parables which reveal that repentance is required to enter the Kingdom of God; both are in Matthew 13: (1) The parable of the buried treasure – the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; overjoyed, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (2) The parable of the pearl of great price – the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Both parables talk about selling everything, but what is its real message? Are they telling us that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, we should sell all of our possessions and give the money to the poor, or is there another meaning? According to several Church Fathers, most notably Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – 215 AD), he explained that, in the spiritual sense, “selling everything” means repentance and stripping away the passions of the soul. In doing so, we give up every worldly thing so that we can embrace the Kingdom of God – which is the mysterious treasure already within us. Selling everything is not so much about selling the material possessions that we own. The “possessions” that we need to get rid of are things like lust, pride, envy, dishonesty, selfishness, egotism, worldly cares, anger, greed, laziness, gluttony and despondency; i.e., anything that leads to spiritual death. All these things are the “possessions” which we ought to feel overjoyed in “selling.”

Several saints have written extensively about finding the Kingdom of God; e.g., St. Augustine of Hippo, St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila. In his masterpiece “Confessions,” St. Augustine details his search for God which took place within himself – he realized that God had always been present within himself, but he was too distracted by the outside world to find Him there.

For most of his young life, Augustine spent years trying to find the truth in different philosophies and religions, personal ambition and material pleasures; but he didn’t find it in any of these. Overwhelmed by a deep spiritual crisis, he wept under a fig tree. Then he heard a child’s voice chanting, “Tolle lege, tolle lege” which means “Take up and read, take up and read.” Taking this as a divine command, he opened a scroll of the Apostle Paul’s epistles, and he came upon the Letter to the Romans 13: 13-14, which says, “Let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.” The text urged him to leave behind his previous way of life and to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Augustine wrote that instantly, a light of certainty flooded his heart, and all darkness vanished.

St. Augustine’s breakthrough came when he realized that God is an immaterial, unchanging Spirit rather than a physical person or object in the universe. He finally found out that God was waiting to be found right inside of him. He famously wrote in his Confessions: “You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you.” His famous conclusion was: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”



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每周公告 Weekly Bulletin

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Have you found the kingdom of God yet? How does one know that he has found the kingdom of God? Based on the experience of many saints, one knows that he has found the Kingdom of God if he has a profound inner transformation. The signs of living within God's kingdom are highly practical and specific: (1) Living with inner peace instead of worries and anxieties. (2) Living with humility instead of pride. (3) Living with genuine love and compassion for others instead of outwardly conforming to rules and just being nice.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today, we will again need volunteers to help move some tables and chairs from the first floor to the second floor of the Education Building. We will try to do a little each week. The more people who can help, the easier it will be for all. Thank you!

Attention all participants to the UNICOI Summer Camp! Children below 18 years old must be accompanied by their parents and must fill out the PARENT'S (OR GUARDIAN) CONSENT LETTER AND LIABILITY WAIVER FORM. Please submit the completed forms to Huiyen Chang or Anhsing Shen.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has launched its "Rooted in Christ – Growing in Faith" campaign to raise funds for the programs and activities of the Archdiocese. Each parish and mission church in the Archdiocese is expected to participate with their individual goals. The Archdiocese has designated our parish goal of \$60,000, and has scheduled our parish to begin with a preparation period from January to March 2027 and actual campaign period from April to September 30, 2027.

Did you know that you can make donations to the church directly from your retirement account? Each time you make a distribution from your retirement account, it is counted as taxable income. However, if you make a donation (up to \$108,000), to qualified charities through QCD (Qualified Charitable Distributions), these donations, although not tax-deductible, are excluded from taxable income. Many older retired donors use this strategy to lower their taxable income, but it also satisfies Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without increasing their adjusted gross income (AGI). Consult your financial advisor or contact your retirement account specialist.

Prayer List: Susan Lee, Jasmine Ho, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.
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Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 6:30 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 6:30 PM (English)		