

Feast of St. Benedict

Readings at mass - Proverbs 2:1-9, Psalm 33(34):2-11, Matthew 19:27-29

How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. This poverty in *spirit* is what Isaiah spoke about “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit” (Is 57:15). It can seem quite contrary when Peter asked Jesus “what about us? What are we to have, Eh?”. Jesus’ answer reveals that when we leave behind other things for the sake of the Kingdom of God, it is a wise decision. We are trading like that wise merchant in search for fine pearls, who “on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it”. They indeed will get far greater wealth!

Those who embrace the religious life like St. Benedict, sold all their belongings for a loving solitude with God; deeply meditating on the commandments of God, storing them in their hearts. Looking for the mysteries of God as if for silver and buried treasure. It seems so foolish in the sight of the world to surrender one’s life completely for this when we could be doing ‘this, that or the other’. As St. Benedict said, we need God-given light to recognise the voice of God, listen to His voice and not harden our hearts; give up the ‘silver and gold’ in pursuit of the one who made all them.

It is completely rational that in finding a pearl of greater value, we sell everything to possess this – precisely because of its great value. Jesus *IS* of infinite value, St. Paul said, “More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ”.