

FR ALAN'S REFLECTION

WHAT DOMINATES?

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus speaks about the kingdom of heaven being like someone having found the treasure in the field and then going off happy after they had discovered it. I was thinking about the book review of Diarmuid O'Murchu's book *"When the Disciple Comes of Age, Christian identity in the Twenty First Century"* by John Davies where the characteristics of the mature disciple are spoken about. It seems to me that the mature disciple invests everything in God through service of others because they have seen the treasure. My mind also went back to the talk given on Thursday 17th July *"The hope that does not disappoint"* by Dr. Mary Healy where she spoke about how the disciples had such an overwhelming sense of the Father's love for them that they knew that it was time to leave the Upper Room and go out and preach the Gospel. Despite the persecution they subsequently faced in doing this they never lost sight of the treasure that they discovered in the Upper Room on that day.

The question is how do we discover that treasure in our lives? Firstly, to pray for it. In the First Reading God tells Solomon to ask for whatever he wants, and it would be granted unto him. This tells us what God the Father is like. God the Father loves us and desires to give us what is good. God grants the prayer of Solomon because he does not pray for selfish reasons. He prays for something that will benefit others as well as himself. He prays for wisdom and understanding. Secondly, when we feel tempted to lose sight of the treasure that God is offering us, we must not start putting the blame on other people or things. Like the disciples when they started preaching the Gospel, we will inevitably face challenges and difficulties in our lives. At those times it can become easy to claim that we have lost our sense of peace because of our husband/wife, children/parents, not having the house or car we want, our finances, inability to lose weight and so on. Thirdly, to understand that we are never meant to live life on our own. When reviewing Diarmuid O'Murchu's book John Davies chose a quote that also struck a chord with me. "None of us can grow into 'the fullness of life' (John 10) without genuine relational interconnectedness with each other and nature. We are all programmed for this connectedness." Jesus spent time in the desert communing with nature prior to commencing his public ministry. In forming a group of disciples, he called others to share in his mission. The disciples in carrying on Jesus' mission after he had returned to the Father, did so by working closely with one another.

The treasure is found when rather than allowing all the external things of life that arise to dominate us, our lives remain focused on doing the Father's will. Doing what God wants leads us into deeper communion with him, with others and with nature. Like the one who found the treasure in the field we are able to go off happy because no matter what subsequently happens in our lives our peace will never be taken away from us unless we allow it to. God becomes the source of our peace, our happiness, and our fulfilment.