

## **Pastoral reflection for July 26, 2026**

Today in our Gospel from Matthew we hear a trio of brief parables from Jesus about the “kingdom of heaven.” In the first two of these parables, the kingdom of heaven is shown as something of innate and unending value wholly separate from and supreme to any monetary value. A person finds a treasure buried in a field, and—not knowing the monetary value of this treasure—goes ahead and sells all they have to buy the field itself. Another sells all that they own in order to buy a pearl of great price. Both parables emphasize the kingdom of heaven being found or experienced in the selling of all material goods. In an era of greater economic disparity than ever, it becomes evermore apparent how far many have strayed from this Gospel message.

The choice of a pearl as a representation of the treasure of the kingdom of heaven feels intentional, as a pearl is a unique treasure that itself was formed from the very protective and healing force innate within Creation. A mollusk that encounters an irritant of some sort that may threaten its well-being secretes a substance called nacre that forms layer after layer of protective coating around the irritant until, slowly, a pearl is formed. It may be that what gives the pearl its value is the slow, patient, and consistently creative protective force that transforms that-which -would-harm into something beautiful.

The final parable depicts a large haul of fish being sorted into what is good and bad, righteous and wicked. Those who hoard their own worldly wealth will be thrown out with the wicked, while communities that look out for those who are threatened, harmed, or oppressed will be transformed into something beautiful and eternal.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*—David Gaillardetz*