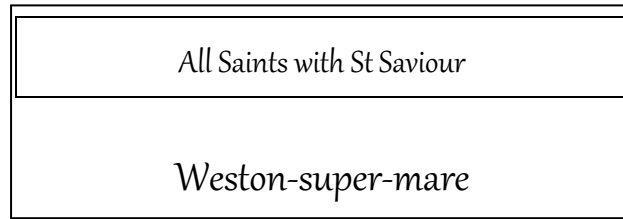




Arms of St Saviour



Arms of All Saints

30<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Dear friends,

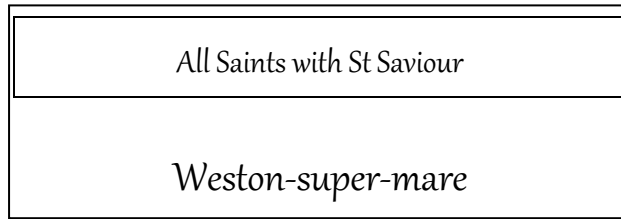
The first two parables in Sunday's Gospel are concerned with what we recognize as being most precious. On the face of it they are very similar. In each case one thing is recognized as being worth everything: in the first case the treasure in the field and in the second the pearl of great price.

However, the way by which the one most precious thing is discovered differs, and St Gregory the Great comments how in the first case the treasure seems to have been stumbled upon, whereas in the second, the pearl seems to have been hard sought. In this we have a parallel with that greatest of gifts, the Faith. Whilst in no sense undermining the utterly gratuitous nature of faith – it is sheer gift – the means by which the gift is realized varies enormously from person to person. But what I suggest is the really crucial point in these parables is the reaction to the enormity of the gift and what is required to accept it. God is not just one more thing in our lives, the icing on the cake: he is the cake, the icing, and the cherry on the top! No worldly attachment is worth what God offers. This is what the rich young man could not grasp – he could not bring himself to give up everything to receive the one thing that truly mattered – and so he went away very sad.

For most of us there is probably a fear that if we loved God whole-heartedly that somehow we might love others less, or life might be less full. But the reality is that when we entrust ourselves completely to God, we love more not less, we enter into the source of all love and we begin to love as God loves, which is so far beyond our often limited conceptions of what it means to love. We enter into the love which can transform the brutality of the Cross into the single greatest act of love, one which reverberates through all time.



Arms of St Saviour



Arms of All Saints

Pope Benedict in his inaugural homily as Pope put it beautifully when he said:

*If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life.*

*Amen.*

Fr Brendan