



Part of ageing seems to be about becoming more acquainted with Outpatient departments! We appear a motley crew in most clinics and surgeries: the worried, the anxious, the calm, the hopeful and the despairing. It's a lot like a dragnet trawling the depths. All of life is there, and everyone needs help. The waiting room is like what our Church is meant to be — there for everyone.

What we are offering can sometimes seem hidden or obscure. A pearl doesn't have the most promising of beginnings, born of grime and mire, but eventually it yields a beautiful jewel. A dragnet is an absolute 'shot in the dark' or is like 'fishing blind'. You just don't know what will emerge. We seem to have settled in our time to knowing the price of everything rather than the value of anything. The Gospel today reminds us that there is a 'price' for this divine treasure. It means making choices and letting go of what does not stand us in good stead. When choosing to be attracted by God, we have to let go of what distracts from God. You certainly do need the wisdom of Solomon and a 'discerning heart' (First Reading).

I always remembered a journalist interviewing a Cardinal asking him what made him enter the

TREASURE FOUND — LIFE RE-ORDERED

Church. He smilingly replied that as life was so short — he decided to opt for eternity. Solomon seemed to have thought also of the bigger, longer-term picture. The Gospel reminds us of this as well. Our task is to know what is valuable. It's interesting to see that in uncertain times precious metals like Gold are hard currency. Everything else — stocks, shares, virtual currencies — falls in value. Their values are based on trust and there is only one we can truly, deeply trust.

The question is what appreciates, rather than depreciates? What is the most important thing that we can have. An answer to that needs some thought. Some crave security

in food supply and domestic safety, job security and education.

Then when we achieve these things: home, family, wealth, money — we die. Are all these enough in the end? No, they are not. What does matter? A clean conscience, owing nothing to anybody, a bank of good deeds? All true, but underpinning these is striving for these things out of gratitude for what has been done for us — just as God would wish. ■

— Tom Cox

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command ...

Our Father, who art in heaven, ...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, ...

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins, ...

Behold the Lamb of God, ...

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter

under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 102:2)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.**

Prayer after Communion

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Reflection

When have you said, "That was worth it!" after a demanding task?



Lesson

'The one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, the one who sows generously will reap bountifully.' — 2 Corinthians 9:6



Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.