

17th Sunday of Year A

July 27, 2008

Sacrifice and Commitment

St Sebastian's College was founded over ninety years ago. Originally set up to help educate boys from poorer rural areas, the college has grown into a wonderful place of learning and human development.

It is a school with a fine academic record but it's probably better known for achievements in sport, particularly in rowing.

The senior rowing team trains extremely hard. Three early mornings a week for about two hours, you will find the boys going through their paces on the river with the coaching staff. During the week, the boys also participate in strength and conditioning training in the school gym as well as cross training activities such as running, cycling and swimming. Nutrition and diet are also monitored.

The boys rely on a team of support people – students, family, and friends who make a commitment to 'stick by' the boys through the rigours of their training schedule.

Ask the boys why they do it, and they say, "We want to be the best; we want to win." For them their sights are set on interschool, interstate and national regattas.

Ask the boys if all the sacrifices they make are worth it and you are left with no doubt. "Definitely! The prestige, the honour of the college and the possibility of a sporting scholarship are all at stake. Maybe even a shot at the Olympics!"

In today's gospel, we also have examples of people willing to sacrifice everything to realise a dream.

The treasure seeker desires the rare priceless treasure. Once he finds it, he sells all that he has and buys the field that contains the treasure. The pearl merchant longs for the perfect pearl. Once he finds it, he sells everything and buys the pearl.

For us it's a reminder that membership of God's Kingdom calls for total commitment and sacrifice on our part. No half-hearted measures. No distractions. No obstacles.

Being a disciple involves dedication, commitment and sacrifice just like the treasure seeker, the pearl merchant and the rowing team.

However, there is one significant difference. The treasures, the pearl, the rowing medals, are passing prizes. The Kingdom of God is eternal. If we are willing to sacrifice so much for the things that perish, then how much more ought we to be willing to sacrifice for the prize that will last forever.