

Bringing Forth the Kingdom of God

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Most Catholics pray “thy kingdom come” hundreds of times in a year. What are we asking for when we pray, and how will we know when our prayer is answered? Are we praying for a kingdom that is here or one that is coming? The scriptures present the reign of God as both present and in the future. When the Pharisees ask Jesus about the coming of the kingdom, he says, “No one will announce, ‘Look here it is,’ or ‘There it is.’ For behold, the kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:21). At the core of the message of the reign of God—in the Old and New Testaments—is the reality of God’s sovereignty over creation.

Jesus preached about the kingdom through word and deed. In Jesus’ actions we see that when God reigns, the poor have care, and people are freed from demons and healed. Through the parables Jesus taught that the kingdom grows like a mustard seed, is a priceless treasure, and calls for dying to self, forgiveness, and sacrifice.

The Our Father confronts Christians in two ways. It presents the kingdom as having dual timing and also dependent on Christ’s followers for growth. In word and deed, we are signs of God’s kingdom. We forgive and reconcile, even when it is

uncomfortable. We heal by taking time and effort to be present to those who are ill physically, emotionally, or spiritually. We respect, care, and advocate for the poor. When we pray “thy kingdom come,” we are praying for the future triumphant reign of God, and we are also asking to be forgiving, healing people. We pray to be changed in those areas where God does not reign in our lives.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- In what ways do I participate in bringing forth the kingdom in my family, at work, and in other areas of my life?
- What am I being called to sacrifice in order that God can reign more fully in my life?
- How can I gain new insights into the way sin is preventing the spread of God’s kingdom in my life and in the world?

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Volunteer to become part of one of the social action committees in your parish.
- Think about people you need to forgive or reconcile with, pray for the grace to forgive them, and act on that grace.
- Meditate on the Our Father. Pray each verse slowly, pausing to think about how it relates to your life today. **R**

SCRIPTURE CORNER

Psalm 103; John 18:36; Hebrews 12:28

Read and reflect on these passages. What do you bring to the worship experience in the light of your reflection?

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