



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

1. The Kingdom of God

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called upon to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that everyone who 'follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more a man himself,' let them exercise their responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service.

Rule 14

Thy kingdom come, O God,
Thy rule, O Christ, begin;
Break with thine iron rood
The tyrannies of sin.

Where is thy reign of peace,
And purity, and love?
When shall all hatred cease,
As in thy realms above?

When comes the promised time,
That war shall be no more,
When lust, oppression, crime
Shall flee thy face before?

Lewis Hensley, 1824-1905



In attempting to recover the original significance of the parables, one thing above all becomes evident: it is that all the parables of Jesus compel his hearers to come to a decision about his person and mission. The parables imply a Christological self-attestation. When a parable depicts the goodness of God, that goodness is actualised in Jesus. When a parable speaks about the kingdom, Jesus 'hides himself' behind the word kingdom as its 'secret content'. In the parables of the kingdom, therefore, there is the veiled Christological self-attestation of the historical Jesus. For they are all full of 'the secret of the kingdom of God (Mk 4.11), that is to say, the recognition of 'an eschatology that is process of realisation'. The hour of fulfilment is come—that is the urgent note that sounds through them all. The strong man is disarmed, the forces of evil are in retreat, the physician has come to heal, lepers are cleansed; the heavy burden of guilt is removed, the lost sheep brought home, the door of the Father's house stands open, the poor and the beggars are summoned to a banquet; a great joy fills every heart. God's acceptable year has come, for he has manifested whose kingdom it is that shines forth through every word and through every parable—realised in the gospel; consummated in the Parousia.

(adapted from J Jeremias *The Parables of Jesus*)

Q 1 Christ is the King of the kingdom. What are we?

Q 2 How does one 'enter' the kingdom of God?

Q 3 In his earthly ministry, why did Jesus choose to teach with parables?

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. 'Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful' (Heb 10.23)...

The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the kingdom of heaven; it keeps a man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude...

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1817, 1818 (p 403)



Scripture—

Mk 1.14-15

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news.’

Rom 14. 17-19

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual edification.