

11th August 2019 (19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

Wisdom 18:6-9; Psalm 32(33):1,12,18-20,22; Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19; Luke 12:32-48.

'Do not be afraid ... the Father has given you the kingdom!'

In the prayer of the 'Our Father' (Luke 11:1-13; two weeks ago) we pray: your kingdom come This is not a prayer for the future, but a statement about who we are already today. We pray that we learn to grow and recognise the presence of God's reign and will in our daily life.

In today's gospel reading Jesus tells us that we already share God's kingdom, because the Father has seen it fit to give us his kingdom. The life of God, participation in God's kingdom, is not something we can strive for, but a gift freely given to us by the Father. We are created in the image and likeness of God, with God's breath of life within us; and we are confirmed in this image through our dying and rising with Christ in Baptism. We live God's kingdom!

As with each gift that we are given, we are expected to step forward and accept this God-given gift. If we are really committed to living the life of God on earth, everything we do needs to be coloured by this commitment; 'where our heart is, there too is our treasure!'

It is not possible for us to transfer our wealth from one jurisdiction to another without first declaring it and converting it in to a system that can be recognised in the new country; my Australian dollars are useless in the Philippines! The same imagery holds with relation to the kingdom of God. The treasure we have in this life is not immediately relevant in the fullness of the kingdom; we need to 'take it to the bank' and converted into an acceptable currency. Hence the need to 'sell our possessions and give alms; putting our treasure in purses that do not wear out, in heaven!' The way I live now reflects that I am already part of God's kingdom.

Jesus warns us to be on our guard, watchful; the kingdom of God comes stealthily, unannounced and we can easily be caught off guard. We need to be constantly aware of God's kingdom and will within us, so that we are always prepared. If we carry out our duties as is expected of us; if we live in God's will, then God himself will sit us down at his banquet and serve us his finest foods!

As part of God's kingdom, we have different roles and authority to carry out. We do not simply sit back and wait 'the end of times.' Some of us have the role of parents, teachers, leaders, role models in different aspects of life; all are called to be stewards and co-creators of creation. We all have some duty towards this kingdom we are invite to participate in.

The faithful stewards are the ones who carries out their duties towards their master and towards those they are responsible for, 'giving them their food at their proper time.' The stewards who are self-serving and do not carry out the duties assigned to them, will be cut off from their role as stewards.

This has implications in our relationship with the physical world around us. We cannot egoistically close ourselves off from our relationships and think that we are living God's kingdom if we do not concern ourselves with the needs of those around us and of creation itself. If we start or continue to use resources irresponsibly, then we are like the unfaithful self-serving stewards, careless about their duties and who have consequently cut themselves off from the kingdom.

The gospel, with its various images, is meant to encourage us to continue to strive to live as members of God's kingdom, ensuring that our will conforms with God's will in us.

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