

September - October 2018



✦ Generations of Faith ✦  
**FAITH NOTES**  
✦ Enriching, Educating, Engaging All Ages ✦

## Building the Kingdom Jesus Proclaimed

*"I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent."*

-Luke 4:43

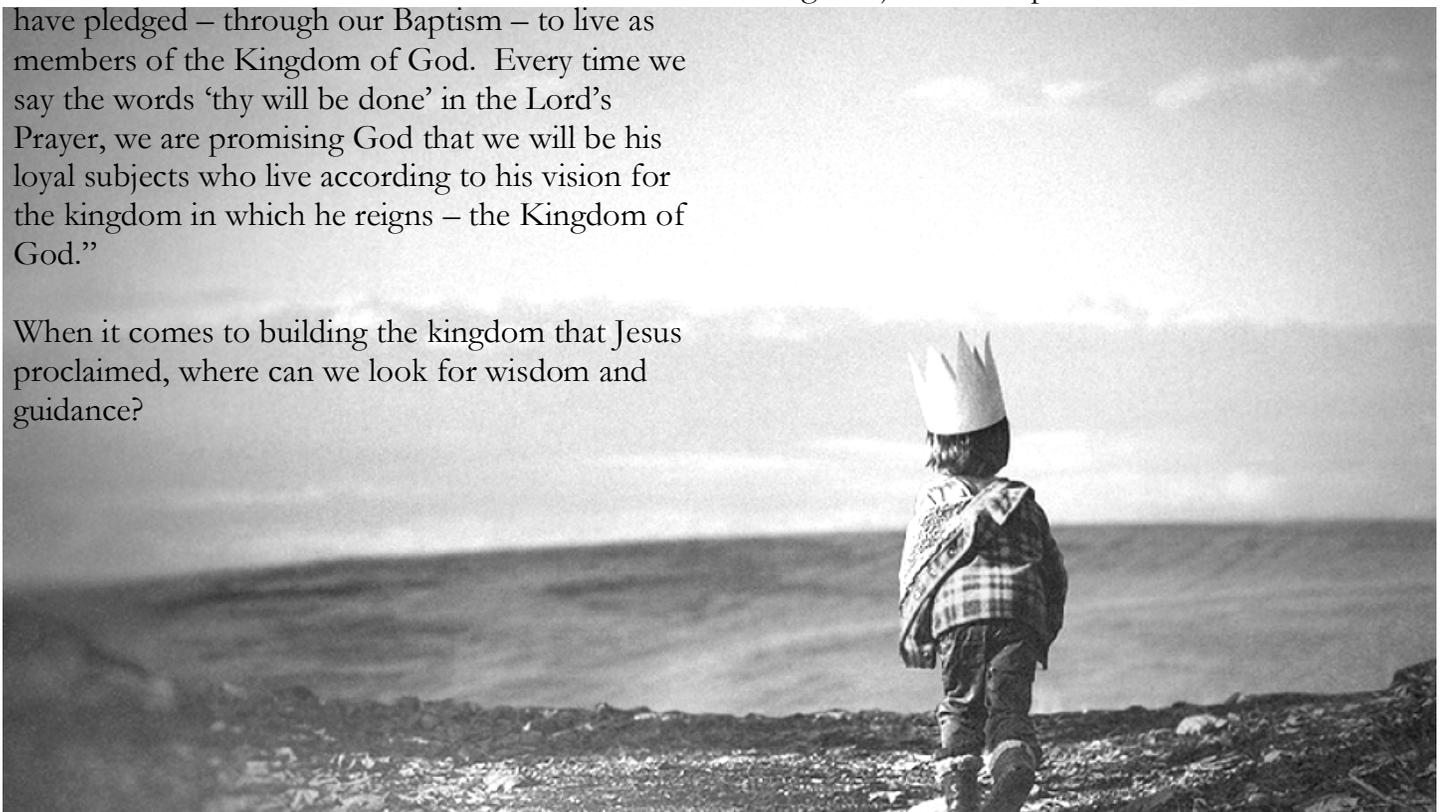
Imagine **you** were a king or a queen...  
What would life be like in **your** kingdom?

Jesus' primary mission was to proclaim - and inaugurate - the Kingdom of God. But what is God's kingdom? Where is God's kingdom? What is life like in God's kingdom? Catholic Theologian Richard McBrien explains: "We can define the Kingdom of God as the redemptive presence of God. This redemptive (or saving) presence of God can be found in everyday personal experiences. Whenever people love one another, forgive one another, bear one another's burdens, work to build up a just and peaceful community - wherever people are of humble heart, open to their creator, and serving their neighbor - God's redemptive and liberating presence is being manifested. God's kingdom and loving rule are in operation there."

God has a vision for his kingdom. Jesus was sent to share God's vision with the world. And so are we. As disciples of Jesus, it is up to us to build the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed. Our friends at Loyola Press remind us that, as Christians "we have pledged - through our Baptism - to live as members of the Kingdom of God. Every time we say the words 'thy will be done' in the Lord's Prayer, we are promising God that we will be his loyal subjects who live according to his vision for the kingdom in which he reigns - the Kingdom of God."

When it comes to building the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed, where can we look for wisdom and guidance?

First and foremost, we can turn to Jesus himself, especially the memories of Jesus preserved and proclaimed in the Gospels. In both word and deed Jesus painted a picture of the kingdom of God for us. We can also look to the first followers of Jesus. We can search the Scriptures to learn how Jesus' first followers set about building the kingdom Jesus proclaimed. The wisdom of their experiences - both their struggles and their successes - provides invaluable and enduring lessons for us today, as we continue their work. And finally, we can look to the centuries of Christians who have recognized that Jesus' words and deeds have implications for both our personal lives and our world at large. Out of this living tradition - ancient and ever growing - comes Catholic social teaching. Modern Catholic social teaching refers to a collection of Church teachings (usually in the form of letters written by Popes, Bishops and groups of Church leaders) whose goal is to help us apply the teachings of Jesus to our lives today, so that we can build the kingdom of God here and now. But as the U.S. Bishops remind us in their *Overview of Catholic Social Teaching*, "Catholic social teaching is like an ancient oak tree. Its roots are the Scriptures that firmly anchor it. Its trunk has grown in girth throughout the centuries... Its branches reach toward the sky of tomorrow, drawing energy from the sun of God's Reign of justice and peace."



## A Closer Look at the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father..."

The Lord's Prayer is the only prayer formula attributed to Jesus himself in the Gospels. You'll find it in two places: Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes it as a "summary of the whole Gospel." (CCC, 2761) When understood properly and embraced fully, it is our clearest blueprint for building the kingdom Jesus proclaimed. Let's take a look at the first two words...

**Our Father:** We call God Father, just as Jesus did. When we call God "Our Father," whom do we mean? Do we mean that God is the Father of just the people in your family? All the people in your Church? Only the people in your country? We mean everyone. God is the Father of all five billion people on earth. God made us all, and loves us all. How would your life be different if you looked at all people through God's eyes ... if you saw every person as a beloved child of God? How would our world be different if we all did this?

"I think that today the world has somewhat lost the meaning of fatherhood. It is a world sick with orphanism. Saying and taking to heart the Our Father means understanding that I am not an only child. It is a risk, that of feeling like only children, that we Christians run. But no. All. Even those who are outcasts, the outsiders, are children of the same Father. Jesus says to us that it will be the poor, the sinners, the prostitutes, the discarded who enter before you into the kingdom of heaven, all." –Pope Francis

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When all is said and done, the kingdom of God is God: God in so far as God is present to us and to our world as a power that heals, that renews, that recreates, and that gives life. To recognize that abiding presence of the kingdom of God in our midst and to work always to remove obstacles to its inbreaking are our fundamental missionary responsibilities. God's gift is our task.”

–Fr. Richard McBrien, "What is the Kingdom of God?"

What we're reading this month:

*"What is the Kingdom of God? A Theologian Explains the Key Image of the Gospel Message at the Center of Jesus' Teaching and Ministry"*  
–Fr. Richard McBrien  
(FREE copies at the Faith Development Resource Table)

*Be a King: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream and You* -Written by Carole Boston Weatherford, Illustrated by James Ransome (Accessible for kids; engaging for adults.

MLK's life is a lesson in building the Kingdom of God)

*Daniel Chooses to Be Kind (Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood)* –Rachel Kalban & Jason Fruchte  
(Excellent way to help younger children discover what life is like in God's kingdom. Also available in board book form as *King Daniel the Kind*)

A Good Study Bible!!!

- ✓ *The Catholic Family Connections Bible*
- ✓ *The Catholic Children's Bible*

## CST 101: Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

### Life and Dignity of the Human Person

All people are holy, made in the image of God. The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of CST: every person is precious, people are more important than things, and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

### Call to Family and Community

People are both holy and social. The desire for community is part of our nature as human beings. Family is the most important community because that is where we learn how to relate to others. How we organize our society directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The Catholic Church proclaims that people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all.

### Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

### Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. Some people do not have what is necessary to live: food, water, work, a safe place to live, school, medical care. Our church teaches that these brothers and sisters must be treated with extra respect and extra care. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

### Solidarity

God made everyone, so we are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the principle of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

### Dignity and Rights of Workers

Money, work, and business exist to serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.

### Care for God's Creation

We show respect for the creator by our stewardship of creation. The earth and all life on it is God's creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan. It is a requirement of our faith.

*Adapted from USCCB and CRS handouts on the seven themes of Catholic social teaching*