



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

Where is the kingdom of God?

Basileia tou theou (Greek) or *Regnum Dei* (Latin) means "Kingdom of God," and it is a consistent theme. The phrase "the Kingdom of God" is used at least fifty times by Jesus in the Gospels, and it appears almost a hundred times in the entire New Testament. It must be an important idea to be mentioned so often.

When Jesus says that "the Kingdom of God is at hand" in Mark 1:15, He is not speaking of an earthly kingdom or of a territory or place as we know it. Rather than being limited to a geographical location, the Kingdom of God is wherever the Reign of God exists. Wherever men and women accept the dominion of God, that is, allow Christ to reign in their hearts and allow themselves to be governed by God's will rather than by their own. Then the Kingdom of God is present.

An analogy to this would be the Roman Empire if we describe it not in territorial terms but in terms of Roman Law, Roman culture, Roman roads, Roman language (Latin), Roman currency, etc., throughout the Empire. Territorial boundaries are artificial delineations. Likewise, the Kingdom of God is not limited to heaven but is anywhere and everywhere the Reign of God is embraced. Hell is one place where no one accepts the dominion of God.

The Kingdom of God is in our

hearts, our minds, and our souls. At the time Jesus walked this earth two millennia ago, people were expecting an earthly or political Messiah who would restore the regal might of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Israel to something resembling the days of King David and King Solomon. Christ did not come to establish an earthly kingdom but a spiritual kingdom.

The phrase "thy kingdom come" in the Lord's Prayer refers to the two comings of Christ. Historically, Jesus came two thousand years ago and established His kingdom in the hearts of all the baptized. Eschatologi-

Church Is Not Equal to the Kingdom

It is one thing to insist... that the Church is the servant or instrument of the Kingdom of God. It is another matter entirely to suggest that the Church is itself the Kingdom of God.

Before Vatican II many Catholics said precisely that. We automatically assumed that whenever the New Testament speaks of the Kingdom of God, as in the many parables of the Kingdom (the net cast into the sea, the mustard seed that grows into a large tree, and so forth), the New Testament was flatly identifying it with the Church. Actually, it was not.

The Kingdom is larger than the Church. After all, "Not

cally, (a fancy theological word meaning "at the end of time"), there will be the Second Coming of Christ. At that time, the Devil and those who choose his reign will be cast from this earth into hell, never to escape. The righteous, who have chosen the reign of God, will be with Him forever. The prayer reminds us that there is an end of the world; there is Judgment Day and a Day of Reckoning. The rulers of this world will find out who is really in charge.

From "The Catholicism Answer Book", Trigilio Jr & Brighenti, Sourcebooks Inc, 2007; pg 239

everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Or, in the words of St. Augustine as adapted by Karl Rahner, S.J., "Many whom God has, the Church does not have. And many whom the Church has, God does not have." When the Church identifies or equates itself with the Kingdom, the Church is declaring that it is the saving presence of God on earth and at least implying that God is not present as a saving God anywhere else except in the Church. This is what some of the Council

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Things to talk about:

- Who or what has helped to form your concept of the Kingdom of God?
- Where have you observed "the Kingdom of God" at work?
- What does it mean to you to know that the Kingdom of God is at hand?
- How have you invited others to be part of the Kingdom of God?

fathers called "triumphalism." "What's the harm in it?" one might ask. Apart from the danger of idolatry, i.e., of confusing something finite with the Infinite, the identification of Church and Kingdom makes any meaningful renewal and reform of the Church almost impossible. If the Church is regarded as the Kingdom, then a person who criticizes the Church and calls for institutional and structural change is, in effect, criticizing God and calling for change in the way God chooses to deal with us and be with us..

From the Catholic Update "What is 'the Kingdom of God'" by Rev. Richard McBrien, St Anthony's Messenger, 1980



Saint in the Spotlight—St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1568-1591)

The Church remembers St Aloysius Gonzaga this Saturday, June 21.

The Lord can make saints anywhere, even amid the brutality and license of Renaissance life. Florence was the “mother of piety” for Aloysius Gonzaga despite his exposure to a “society of fraud, dagger, poison and lust.” As a son of a princely family, he grew up in royal courts and army camps. His father wanted Aloysius to be a military hero.

At age seven he experienced a profound spiritual quickening. His prayers included the Office of Mary, the psalms and other devotions. At age nine he came from his hometown of Castiglione to Florence to be educated; by age 11 he was teaching catechism to poor children, fasting three days a week and practicing great austerities. When he was 13 years old he traveled with his parents and the

Empress of Austria to Spain and acted as a page in the court of Philip II. The more Aloysius saw of court life, the more disillusioned he became, seeking relief in learning about the lives of saints.

A book about the experience of Jesuit missionaries in India suggested to him the idea of entering the Society of Jesus, and in Spain his decision became final. Now began a four-year contest with his father. Eminent churchmen and lay-people were pressed into service to persuade him to remain in his “normal” vocation. Finally he prevailed, was allowed to renounce his right to succession and was received into the Jesuit novitiate.

Like other seminarians, Aloysius was faced with a new kind of penance—that of accepting different ideas about the

exact nature of penance. He was obliged to eat more, to take recreation with the other students. He was forbidden to pray except at stated times. He spent four years in the study of philosophy and had St. Robert Bellarmine as his spiritual adviser.

In 1591, a plague struck Rome. The Jesuits opened a hospital of their own. The general himself and many other Jesuits rendered personal service. Because he nursed patients, washing them and making their beds, Aloysius caught the disease himself. A fever persisted after his recovery and he was so weak he could scarcely rise from bed. Yet, he maintained his great discipline of prayer, knowing that he would die within the octave of Corpus Christi, three months later. He was 23.

www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay



Scriptures for a Month's Meditation on the Kingdom of God

WEEK 1

Sunday - Matthew 6:9-13
Monday - Mark 1:14-15
Tuesday - Luke 8:1-15
Wednesday - Matthew 13:24-43
Thursday - Matthew 13:44-52
Friday - Mark 4:21-29
Saturday - Matthew 8:5-13

WEEK 2

Sunday - John 18:33-37
Monday - Matthew 18:23-35
Tuesday - Matthew 20:1-16
Wednesday - Matthew 21:28-46
Thursday - Matthew 22:1-14
Friday - Matthew 25:1-13
Saturday - Matthew 25:14-30

WEEK 3

Sunday - Matthew 25:31-46
Monday - Luke 12:22-34
Tuesday - Matthew 18:1-5
Wednesday - John 3:1-15
Thursday - Luke 22:14-30
Friday - John 12:27-36
Saturday - John 19:1-16

WEEK 4

Sunday - Luke 23:32-43
Monday - Matthew 11:2-15
Tuesday - Matthew 12:22-32
Wednesday - Luke 17:20-21
Thursday - Matthew 16:13-20
Friday - John 20:19-23
Saturday - Luke 1:26-38

Want to know more?

Would you like to know more about Faith? Check out the following books and websites for more information:

- “US Catholic Catechism for Adults”, USCCB, 2006
- <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08646a.htm>
- <http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/CU/ac0980.asp>

These are just suggestions. In providing these we assume no responsibility for, nor do we necessarily endorse these books or websites, their content, or their sponsoring organizations.

“What’s What” is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement [Draft]:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.