

“Peace is ...the kingdom of God”

Solemnity of the Ascension
of the Lord

Acts 1: 3 *“He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.”*

Ephesians 1: 18 *“May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call...”*

Matthew 28: 20 *“And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”*

Reflection:

In the first quotation above, St. Luke tells us, “He presented himself alive to them by many proofs... appearing to them...and speaking about the kingdom of God.” What is the kingdom of God, and what are the “proofs” by which we know it? St. Paul tells us, “The kingdom of God [is] justice, peace, and the joy that is given by the Holy Spirit.”¹ The kingdom of God is Christ’s presence in our world, and the manifestation of His presence in the love, healing, and forgiveness that are expressed through God’s people. Each of us is called to build up the kingdom by our lives, with our words and our actions. This is called **witness**. In today’s first reading, Jesus said, “... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” He is talking to us! The “proofs” of God’s kingdom not only include God’s glory and power, but also hope, joy, and peace, which only God can give. These are expressions of His love, in and through us.

Thy Kingdom Come

Christ went about proclaiming that the kingdom of God is at Hand. Yet we continue to pray for its coming in the Lord’s prayer. “The Kingdom is realized partially on earth and permanently in heaven.”² When we were baptized, we received the Holy Spirit, we were called by name, we were clothed in Christ, we were given the roles of priest, prophet, and king (as shepherd). It is not for us to take a back seat and follow someone else’s lead when it suits us. It is our responsibility to work for the fullness of God’s kingdom on earth, in small ways, every day. In today’s gospel, Jesus tells us, “[teach] others to observe all that I have commanded you.” We teach by example. We are recognized as His disciples by our compassion, by our gentleness and kindness, by how much we imitate Christ who sends us forth. It is then that the kingdom of God is made visible. When we grow tired and discouraged, we must turn to the Lord to be renewed and refreshed, and start again. Jesus tells us, “I am with you always.” Jesus is always there to help us, to guide us, to lift us up. Let us go forth to love and serve the Lord in one another!

“They will know we are Christians by our love”

Action:

- *Clothe the naked: donate t-shirts to the migrant workers. **
- *Feed the hungry: participate in the Mobile Food Pantry on June 18th. * (call Chris 313-3580 to sign up)*
- *Participate in the Corpus Christi procession and prayer on June 26 at 2 p.m., hosted by Immaculate Conception Church, to honor Our Lord on the Feast of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. **
- *Attend the presentation about CCSJ’s Guatemala project June 28. Find out what you can do to help.*
- *Perform other works of mercy by acts of prayer, forgiveness, visiting the sick or lonely, caring for others with love.*

1. Rom. 14:17. 2. United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, Washington, D.C., 2006, pp.79-80.

* see bulletin for details.