



The Reign of God: Transforming Our World

Reflection

Throughout his life, Jesus lifted up a vision of the reign of God. He embraced the wounds and hopes of his time and witnessed, in word and work, to a radically *new relationship* between God and the human family—within the human family itself and throughout all of creation.

This relationship is marked by integrity, wholeness, and freedom from fear and anxiety. It evidences justice and peace, consolation and compassion. This radically new relationship is the coming of the reign of God. We cannot know Jesus intimately without responding to this reign, nor can we embrace the reign of God without coming to know Jesus Christ intimately. He is the reign of God incarnated in the world.

We need therefore to explore our relationship with Jesus and his Body, the Church. Likewise, we need to see the implications this has for our lives and for our world. Like Jesus, we are sent “into the whole world to bear witness, through faith and works, to God’s love” in preparing the reign of God.¹ As the people of God, we are called to embrace the “joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted....”² Through silent witness we strive to live Christ’s love and gospel values at home, in the neighborhood, and in the market place.³ We are seeing the world and everyday life as integrally involved in God’s reign.

We are also called to bear witness by telling others how Jesus Christ is the word of life, the very reign of God come in flesh among us. How has Jesus come alive for us today? How has he touched and transformed our lives? How has he empowered us to work for the reign of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism, confirmation and Eucharist? We are to tell others why we live Christ’s love and gospel values. Our labor to extend the reign or kingdom of God will bear little fruit unless they are the launching pad for ongoing evangelization of the world.⁴

In struggling for the fullness of God’s reign in this time and place, we enter deeply into the mystery of God’s call to do justice. Let us imagine our role as leaven, breaking open the connection between the reign of God and the challenge to work for a just world order. The coming of the reign of God overflowed from the life and preaching of Jesus, “[He] 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’” (Mark 1:14, 15). He used parables especially to describe the reign of God, knowing that we would find therein qualities needed for doing justice in our world.

Christ challenges us, as the people of God, to read the “signs of the times,”⁵ to see both the good and the bad of modern life, and to choose to shape our society into a just world order. The reign of God challenges us to personal and global transformation, to see action on behalf of justice as participation in the transformation of the world and as essential for preaching the gospel.⁶

And as we journey into this new way of life, this “new reality in which God’s power is manifested and the longing of the people is fulfilled,”⁷ we will journey together within a community of faith, the Church. For “only through the loving interaction of disciples of Jesus committed to living out the gospel in everyday life will there be a true transformation of the earth.”⁸

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- ¹ *On Social Concern (Sollicitudo rei socialis)* (December 30, 1987), John Paul II, 48.
 - ² *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et spes)*, 1.
 - ³ Pope Paul VI, *On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)*, 21.
 - ⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.
 - ⁵ *Church in the Modern World*, 4.
 - ⁶ *Justice in the World*, International Synod of Bishops (1971), 6.
 - ⁷ Excerpt from *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* © 1983, United States Catholic Conference, Inc., Washington, DC, p. 45. Used by permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this work may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.
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