

“Seek First the Kingdom” by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

Discussion Questions January 2014

In a discussion with Cardinal Wuerl, his answer to the question “What impact do you hope this book will have?” was:

“The goal of the book is to help people appreciate more fully their individual and specific role in realizing the kingdom. Every single one of us is called to be an active evangelist. An evangelist is simply the disciple who shares the faith. I hope this book will be helpful to followers of Christ, members of the Church, as they strive to go to the next step, that is, share the faith.”

With this goal in mind, let us examine this book and our response to its challenge.

In order for us to seek the Kingdom, we need to understand what it is.

What is the Kingdom of God? What are some of the characteristics and descriptions of this Kingdom that we are all seeking?

How do the Sacraments, seven signs of the Kingdom, actually admit us to the Kingdom?

What do you think our world and this country would be like if we did not have the 10 Commandments, the Golden Rule, the Beatitudes, and other religious guidelines? What do we see in our world that is the result of these basic principles being ignored?

Cardinal Wuerl discusses a few elements of Catholic social doctrine: (p. 55-59)

- Sin
- Universal care
- Deeds of Mercy
- The Common good
- Solidarity
- Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion
- Universal destination of goods

How does our religious life and our convictions gel with our secular life and the secularism of our modern world? How can we deal with this conflict?

We are Ambassadors for the Kingdom (p. 77). How can we approach this job?

The world of politics presents some of our greatest challenges in seeking the Kingdom. What are some of those issues? How do we deal with the conflict of secularism and the knowledge of our religious beliefs?

The Catholic Church in the United States is responsible for so many institutions we take for granted that are the basis of social justice: schools, hospitals, charitable organizations to name a few. This is often forgotten when other Church controversies are publicized. Why has the Church been a leader in these areas and how do we make sure that that legacy continues?

The Priesthood is a commitment to service and to ministry. It is also necessary for the establishment of God's kingdom among us (p.146). What can we do as a faith community to promote and support the Priesthood?

Cardinal Wuerl discusses the importance of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. What is their importance in our spiritual life? What is the significance of the celebration of the Mass?

"The New Evangelization is more an outlook on life than it is a program. It's an increasing turning toward the Lord, returning to the Lord. It's about conversion-yours and mine, first of all-but also all the people we'll take along with us."
(p.168)

Has this book helped you to understand this concept? What are some ways that we can start this process in our own lives? How does St. Augustine's City of God fit in with this concept of the new evangelization?

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The kingdom of God is at hand!