

Singing Our Faith
6th Sunday in Ordinary Time – February 11, 2018

The Kingdom of God



1. The king - dom of God is jus - tice and joy;
2. The king - dom of God is mer - cy and grace;
3. The king - dom of God is chal - lenge and choice:
4. God's king - dom is come, the gift and the goal;



For Je - sus re - stores what sin would de - stroy.
The cap - tives are freed, the sin - ners find place,
Be - lieve the good news, re - pent and re - joice!
In Je - sus be - gun, in heav - en made whole.



God's pow - er and glo - ry in Je - sus we know;
The out - cast are wel - comed God's ban - quet to share;
God's love for us sin - ners brought Christ to his cross:
The heirs of the king - dom shall an - swer his call;



And here and here - af - ter the king - dom shall grow.
And hope is a - wak - ened in place of de - spair.
Our cri - sis of judge - ment for gain or for loss.
And all things cry "Glo - ry!" to God all in all.

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The stark reading from Leviticus talks about the unclean leper living apart from others. Old Testament readings such as this may seem strange to us. Why do we need to hear it? Leprosy isn't common in today's world. Even related to Old Testament times, what does a law about skin disease have to do with God? Looking at the Old Testament from a New Testament perspective can help make it more accessible and apply it to our faith.

Many parts of the Mosaic Law talk about avoiding "unclean" practices: washing habits, touching certain things, and having certain diseases like leprosy. Remember, God's initial plan was to have humanity in union with him. As we know, that didn't work out! The law, then, drew people closer to God through regulations such as avoid uncleanness. With this context, think of **unclean** as a parallel to **death** or **separation**. In his ministry, Jesus slowly reveals the Kingdom of God, which climaxes with his suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus doesn't abolish the law, he fulfills it (Matthew 5:17) – death is no more, humanity's union with God is restored. Many of the miracles foreshadow this ultimate triumph over death.

The hymn "The Kingdom of God" is all information we already know – but a reminder never hurt anyone! The first stanza leads with the line "For Jesus restores what sin would destroy." Jesus destroys sin and death, and restores humanity's relationship with God. Amid the darkness of our world, this text gives us hope that God's kingdom of justice, joy, mercy, and grace will ultimately triumph.

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Pertaining specifically to today's readings is the third line of the second stanza – "The outcast are welcomed God's banquet to share." Like other healing miracles, not only is the person's physical state restored, but they are also **welcomed** into God's kingdom.

The take-away for us as disciples: model Jesus the healer by welcoming the outcast, caring for the poor and marginalized, and letting all know the eternal benefits of being in communion with the Church. This sentiment is echoed by St. Paul in the second reading,

"Do everything for the glory of God.

Avoid giving offense,

whether to the Jews or Greeks or the church of God.

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

As we leave Mass this weekend, the words of the beloved closing hymn raise our spirits to be joyful "imitators of Christ."

No storm can shake my inmost calm

While to that Rock I'm clinging.

Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,

How can I keep from singing?

Stephen Eros

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