

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

1 Kings 3:5, 7–12; Psalm 119:57, 72, 76–77, 127–128, 129–130; Romans 8:28–30; Matthew 13:44–52

Dear brothers and sisters,

We have been praying the Lord's Prayer, the prayer of our Lord Jesus handed down to his disciples. When we pray it, we call God our Father in heaven and ask, "May your Kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Through this prayer, we are introduced to his deep desire for the Kingdom of God and invited to share that longing. If we seek what Jesus seeks, everything else will come together. That's why we say, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all its righteousness, and all good things shall be added unto you" (Matt 6:33).

What is the Kingdom of God? In Greek, "basilea tou Theo" means the reign of God. This phrase has two meanings: it describes God's rule in our hearts and our eternal home. These two ideas go hand in hand. The Church helps us understand both the journey and the destination.

Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like a hidden treasure or a valuable pearl, underscoring its preciousness. Finding it brings true joy, and giving up everything for it fulfills our deepest hopes. We are called to build our lives on its values: peace, love, humility, forgiveness, justice, and unity.

We are responsible for how we use our blessings and how we live. Our choices matter and carry real consequences. Jesus warns that those who act unjustly and do not repent will face judgment. The angel will separate people and cast some into a fiery furnace, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth (cf. Matt 13:42). This is a sad and tragic outcome. But the good news is that we always have the chance to choose the Kingdom. It is always open to us, and we are all called to become like Jesus (cf. Rom 8:29).

Solomon's story inspires us. In a dream, God told Solomon he could ask for anything he wanted. Though young, he did not ask for wealth, fame, or a long life. Instead, he asked for a wise and understanding heart to lead his people well. God was pleased with his choice and granted him wisdom, wealth, honor, and a long life (cf. 1 Kings 3:7-12). This story reminds us to put God first.

How do we know whether we have truly chosen God and made Him our top priority?

We see it in our first thoughts each morning as we pray and thank the Lord. We show it by honoring God throughout the day, remaining faithful, and seeking ways to serve. At night, we thank God for both our successes and our failures. We trust Him to watch over us through the night and to help us grow in His love each new day.

How can we tell if we are taking God for granted and not putting Him first?

It shows when our first thoughts in the morning are about ourselves and our plans. We notice it when we work only for our own success, seek praise, and look for meaning in worldly achievements. At night, we might complain about not having enough time to relax. We also show this by going to bed thinking only about ourselves, worrying about the future, and feeling stressed about tasks and deadlines.

As a Church, we are nourished by the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, and we trust in the power of God's Kingdom. Our patron, St. Therese, spoke with confidence: "I understand, and I know from experience that 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' Jesus does not need books or

teachers to instruct souls; He teaches without the noise of words. Never have I heard Him speak, but I feel that He is within me at each moment; He is guiding and inspiring me in what I must say and do."

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all its righteousness,
and all good things shall be added unto you"

Fr. Manny Hewe
Pastor