

Thy Kingdom Come

From yesterday until Pentecost we are sharing in the Thy Kingdom Come initiative. Though started by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York it has now become both ecumenical and global. Its main aim is to pray for more people to come to know Jesus Christ. Its focus is thus primarily one of mission and evangelism.

However, I would like to suggest that peace and reconciliation have an important part in this. What do people so often see in our world today: violence, conflict, deprivation, exploitation, oppression, injustice. What do people surely want in their lives: peace, stability, respect, an opportunity to develop as full human beings.

The message we as Christians have to offer is that that peace, that true, deep and lasting peace, comes from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is our peace, the source of all peace. That is God's will for all people, peace that is imparted in his Son through his Holy Spirit.

This is a message people surely long to hear. And it is surely an attractive one if presented in the right way. For it has to be presented within the broader context of God's love: God's love for all people irrespective of their character, their background, of who they are. That can sometimes be a challenge to us who may perhaps have preconceptions as to the sort of person who may qualify for God's love.

For God's love is for all, as Jesus states quite emphatically in our reading just now from St John's Gospel (John 3.13-17): "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." God wishes all to be saved, liberated, given life in all its fullness.

Yet you may ask: what about those who do not believe. It is of course our task as Christians to share our faith with others, to show something of God's love, of God's peace in our lives. We are called to proclaim and attract people to the superior values of God's kingdom. That is the great challenge the "Thy Kingdom Come" initiative presents to us.

Ultimately, though, it is God who judges, not us. It is God who can see into people's hearts and minds. We can assist the process, even being the catalyst to help others turn to Christ. Yet it is God who comes into their lives and potentially changes them. And so we pray for that encounter, that encounter of love and of peace. Our prayer is that God's kingdom may indeed come into their lives.

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