

Homily 21st Sunday Year A 2020

The motto or mission statement of the Assumptionists is taken from the Our Father, **'Thy Kingdom Come'** and our founder, Emmanuel d'Alzon, added **"because of the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ."** Peter was given the keys to this kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth. However, where we say kingdom, the French use the word 'règne', the **reign** of God. Wherever God rules, God rules with love, dedication, honour, dignity and much, much more. The kingdom is about people, people's hearts, and not territory. We all want to be part of this kingdom but not all of us know it or believe it strongly enough. Richard Rohr refers to the kingdom of God as the **realm** of God. He quotes G. K. Chesterton, *"It is merely that when someone has found something which he prefers to life itself, he then begins to live for the first time."* And Rohr adds: *"Deep down we all want to surrender to someone other, or something we can prefer to our own small life. Without such a lifeline of love, the distance between God and the soul is not bridged. And here is the wonderful surprise: we can surrender to God without losing ourselves! The irony is that in surrendering to God we find ourselves in a new and much larger field of meaning. Jesus' metaphor for this larger field of meaning, purpose, and connection is **"The Realm of God."** Jesus announced, lived, and inaugurated a new social order, an alternative to violence, exclusion, and separation. Jesus went so far as to promise us this alternative reality. It is not some kind of fantastic utopia but a very real and achievable peace, achieved by the grace of God. Jesus called it the *Reign or Kingdom of God.*"*

Emmanuel d'Alzon believed that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, is central to the Gospel. The reign of God is identified with the mission and person of Jesus. From the beginning of his ministry, Christ announced that the kingdom was present among us but said that it would only reach its fulfilment at the end of time. As our Saviour, Jesus' sacrifice enables us to live and work effectively for the reign of God. So, Christ invites us to follow him and sends us out as evangelisers. A call echoed in the Decree of Vatican II in the Apostolate of the Laity. The Kingdom or the reign of God remains a major concern and central theme in preaching the Gospel. Emmanuel d'Alzon made it clear that the reign of God is essentially the reign of the three divine persons: Father, Son and Spirit. A reign entrusted to Jesus Christ by the fact that it is linked directly with his kingship. The psalms, the prophets, Revelation are full of this kingship of Christ.

Since Christ is our King and we are members of his Kingdom, we are reminded of our royal dignity, our high honour, reverence and respect; the importance of service and care for each other. Since this is true for us it is true for everyone. Only when we live in this way will the kingdom of God, the reign of God, come to its beautiful fulfilment. **Pope Francis** puts it like this: ***the kingdom of God is founded on Christ's love and rooted in hearts... giving peace, freedom and fullness of life to those who welcome it.***

Finding a woman sobbing because she had locked her keys in her car, a passing soldier assures her that he can help. She looks on amazed as he takes a pair of trousers out of his kitbag, rolls them into a tight ball and rubs them against the car door.

Magically the door of the car opens..... "That's so clever," the woman gasps. "How did you do that?" "Easy," replies the soldier. "These are my khakis".