

NOVEMBER 12, 2020
Memorial of St. Josaphat, Bishop & Martyr
Luke 17: 20-25

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS HERE.”

When we show kindness to people and grateful for it, we praise not only the person’s kindness but God’s generosity. In our first reading, St. Paul was so thankful for the generous heart of Philemon for his open heart to his fellow workers whom Paul sent to him. Paul said to Philemon full of love and graciousness: “I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.”¹

My brothers and sisters, Paul is reminding us that we can be an instrument of graciousness and unity by serving others with love. We regard each other, each man and woman as part of our family, our brothers and sisters. For Paul, master and slave have one and equal Christian dignity as he said in one of his letters: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”²

As one family, we rely on God’s goodness and justice which everyday we need to anchor on His power and might. When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the reign of God come, He rejects the question of when. There is no here or there, can not be identified with a certain point of time, a warning that no one will either predict the end of the world on a particular day. “There is no particular, all-holy place where the kingdom must appear, in one country rather than another. Jesus’ answer is baffling but also consoling: The reign of God is already in your midst. Intimately, personally rooted within us, is the kingdom of God, already begun in Jesus who dwells within us. In him we may

¹ Philemon 7 NRSV Catholic Bible Press, USA

² Galatians 3: 28 NRSV Catholic Bible Press, USA

already taste the sweetness of eternal life. Here we get the strength to be strong and loyal, for God's wisdom already lives in our hearts."³

Like our saint for today, St. Josaphat, "an Eastern Rite bishop, is held up as a martyr to church unity because he died trying to bring part of the Orthodox Church into union with Rome."⁴ He pursued the unity of the Church by doing what is right and with love, offering himself to be beacon of peace and unity among its members. While in front of his people especially those who are separating from Rome: "You people want to kill me. You wait in ambush for me in the streets, on the bridges, on the highways, in the marketplace, everywhere. Here I am, I came to you as a shepherd. You know I would be happy to give my life for you. I am ready to die for union of the Church under St. Peter and his successor the Pope."⁵

So, my brothers and sisters, God's reign is already here with us, in our daily experiences through our generosity, love, compassion for others and of God. When we do good deeds for others, they feel the presence of God, a manifestation that God reigns in them and in us. By that we will not be anxious of the end of time because we already in God's kingdom everyday. We will not be afraid because we are with God through our daily kindness and good works. May St. Josaphat be our inspiration to bring peace and unity around us.

³ www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie

⁴ www.catholic.org

⁵ *ibid*