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THE INNER KINGDOM

By Sister Jane DeLisle, CSJ

*“Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom
and cured every disease among the people.”*

MATTHEW 4:23

Reflection

I was taken by the line from Matthew’s Gospel that “Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom and cured every disease among the people.” What is this “kingdom” Jesus proclaimed as good news? In the Hebrew-Christian tradition, “kingdom” has both a spiritual and political connotation.

The apostles, disciples, and those who were attracted to Jesus were conflicted, and hoped for a political solution to their struggles with injustice and Roman occupation. Yet, as I reflect on the Gospels, Jesus never promised a political

resolution. Rather, he promoted a spiritual transformation. This inner conversion was a very different reality. He went so far as to clarify in Luke 17:21 that “the kingdom of God is within you.” Jesus is the reflection of God who desires to be one with us. He is God’s Love present in our beautiful yet wounded world. He bears the Kingdom within himself.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ wrote, "***We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience.***"

My own inner reality is more available to me than the larger world of politics and governments debating who has the most influence, power, and control. I am invited to consciously pay attention and to take responsibility for who I am. I can do something about my inner kingdom, my inner house, my own heart and soul. Change and inner healing require awareness, hard work, patience, and dependence on grace to transform that inner kingdom. It is there that my relationship with God, myself, and others finds a true home. In attentive silence, awareness of my conscious spiritual being awakens within me.

There is a subtle sense of presence within this inner space of my soul. Divine life sparks awareness. This inner kingdom is where I am most myself, the essence of who I am as a reflection of the face of God. This is the Self that I take with me into the world, and all I bring to the afterlife. While I am given life to nourish, grow, and sustain me, I am to foster or tend my own inner spiritual self as well. Aware of the “kingdom within me,” I have an opportunity for healing, and for deepening intimacy, to become more of whom God created me to be.

Might this inner healing be the focus of Jesus’ life and ministry? His preaching and healing are about the deeper reality of the inner self that was created to reflect something of God and the fullness of life to which all are invited. With the grace of God, we engage the kingdom of God within us. Access to God’s sustaining love and mercy continues to be offered unconditionally. This is the “kingdom” of which Jesus spoke. We all need the healing grace that opens us to the full stature of life in God, to be a clear reflection of God’s great love.



Photo by Brooke Cagle from Unsplash

For Pondering

- What is the landscape of my inner reality (the kingdom within me)? Ego and Soul.
- What false impressions or patterns of behavior hold me back from life-giving relationships with God, self, others?
- What help, grace, or blessing do I need to heal the wounds within me?

Closing Prayer

Kingdom God, I rejoice and give thanks that you have formed me in your likeness. May the blessing of your transforming presence stir me to love and to fullness of life. Be my constant companion and abiding presence, drawing me home to you and to the best of all you created me to be. I give thanks for the slow work of your love. Amen.

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