

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
 Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.
 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
 Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
 for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
 and every utter every kind of evil word against you
 falsely because of me.
 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven
 (*Mt 5:3-12*).

205 The Sermon on the Mount reveals life in God's kingdom and points to the fact that the kingdom of God is God's gift, not something earned through works of the Law. Only by receiving the kingdom in faith and obedience to the will of God does a human being become the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (see *Mt 5:13-16*).

206 Christ does not replace the Law with the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil them" (*Mt 5:17*). Christ rather discloses the full meaning of the Old Testament commandments:

You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder;" and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgment." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment ... You have heard that it was said ... But I say to you ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (*Mt 5:21-22; 27-28, 48*).

207 The kingdom of God is a gift of God's love: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another" (*Jn 13:34*). When we receive divine love into our life, we begin to perceive others in a new way—as our neighbours (see *Lk 10:25-37*). The power of love even conquers hatred towards enemies:

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous (*Mt 5:43-45*).

208 The kingdom of God is a kingdom of God's justice—the will of the Father, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (*Mt 6:33*). When "sons and daughters of the kingdom" do not live by

the word of Christ, they become like salt that has lost its taste, or as light that has been extinguished: "If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (*Mt 6:23*). Everyone who does the will of the Father builds his life upon rock: "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock" (*Mt 7:24-25*).

b. The Signs of the Coming of the Kingdom

1) The Words of Christ

209 A sign of the coming of the kingdom of God is the preaching of the Good News (the Gospel): "Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the good news of God, and saying: `The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the gospel" (*Mk 1:14-15*), The Divine Word, the Son of God, spoke in all his power and with full authority. We read, "Never has anyone spoken like this!" (*Jn 7:46*). The word spoken by Christ is not his own, but the word of the Father, who sent him (see *Jn 14:24*). The power of Christ's word is professed by the apostle Peter: "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life!" (*Jn 6:68*).

210 Christ teaches about the kingdom of God in parables. Using simple yet deep imagery from life, he reveals the mystery of God's life. The kingdom of God is like a field, where both wheat and weeds grow together, side by side, until the harvest time (see *Mt 13:24-30*); like a seed, which grows into a large tree (see *Mt 13:31-32*; *Lk 13:19*). The kingdom of God is like leaven in flour (see *Mt 13:33*; *Lk 13:21*); and like a treasure hidden in a field, a pearl of great value, and a fishing net (see *Mt 13:44-50*). The kingdom of God is also like a king who forgives the debts of his servants (see *Mt 18:23-35*), like a householder who generously rewards the labourers working in the vineyard (see *Mt 20:1-16*), like a king who invites
might increase them (see *Mt 25:14-30*). The kingdom of God grows in the world, as seeds in the earth, until the time of the harvest (see *Mk 4:26-29*).