Kingdom of God

Teacher Background

God ‘lives in the light who no one can approach’ (1Tim 6:16). Speaking about God is therefore problematic. We are speaking about matters of faith, not of observation. And we are attempting with limited concepts to plumb the infinite. St Augustine said that it is easier to describe what God is not, than to describe God. In our speaking about God, then, we have constantly to be aware of the limitations of our language. Whatever we say is but an image of God, a shadowy reflection that bears some trace of the reality.

God as mystery
In religious language, mystery has a special meaning. It does not simply denote something that is puzzling or incomprehensible. Paul VI defined mystery as ‘a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God’. Because God is totally other than we are, totally of the spiritual order, we cannot know God directly. Our experience of God is always mediated. That is to say that we are touched by the reality of God through events and things visible to us.

For Christians, Christ is the great mystery. Human in every way, he is at the same time God come among us. To know Jesus is to know God. We can also describe the Church and its sacraments as mystery, because they are tangible realities infused with a hidden presence and action of God. Indeed, the Christian message is ultimately about one mystery, God - who is revealed sacramentally through creation, through Jesus Christ, through the Church and through history.

Beatitudes and the Kingdom of God
The beatitudes are statements found in both Matthew and Luke that summarise the teaching of Jesus. They are concerned with virtue and how a believer in Jesus Christ can achieve that virtue. The Beatitudes are a map of life; a series of directives helping intended to help a believer on their journey to be with God. They also designate the actual condition of people who follow God’s guidelines.

The Beatitudes in Matthew’s Gospel are simply stated, but are profound in meaning. They guide. They point. They teach. They identify the values that Jesus cares about. They are sometimes called “kingdom values” because they speak about the reign of God. The Latin word for blessed is beatus, from which we get the word beatitude.