

# Retreat Conference 1

## The Kingdom of God is Among You

### Luke 17:1, 20-21

Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he said in reply, “The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, and no one will announce, ‘Look, here it is,’ or, ‘There it is.’ For behold, the kingdom of God is among you.”

### Point I: The Kingdom of God is among you.

- **How Jesus developed the announcement.**
  - After 40 days in the desert, Jesus begins to proclaim the Kingdom in Galilee, where He begins to invite the Apostles to follow Him.
  - Outside of Galilee, to the north, the Apostles are formed by Christ.
  - The Apostles accompany Jesus as He ministers to people in the same region, and they learn what their mission is.
  
- **Your formation mimics the Gospel’s formation of the Jesus’ disciples.**
  - You accepted the invitation to be formed as a spiritual mentor.
    - You made the sacrifices necessary for God to transform you.
    - You learned the three universal calls of discipleship: holiness, prayer and mission.
  - After 2 years of spiritual formation, you cannot only meditate, but teach it to others, along with guiding others in the Sacraments, and their life of virtue. You are able to accompany others as they ask themselves the question, “What does God want (from me)?”
  - Like those of the Gospel the Kingdom of God leads us to happiness, holiness and eternal joy in heaven.
  
- **The Kingdom of God essentially means that it is in you.**
  - Jesus’ message of the Kingdom was a personal one for everyone
  - Baptism gives us membership in the Kingdom.
  - The Kingdom is visible in the Church.
  - The Kingdom is also in our hearts.
  - We are heart-to-heart with Christ.

**Summary:** *The Kingdom of God is in you, and you have within your very own soul the capacity and the power through prayer and the Sacraments to touch the heart of Jesus and have Him touch your hearts for your sake, as well as for the sake of others as the Lord hopes. Friend OF God – friend FOR God.*

**Pause for Time to Reflect:**

**Point II: The Kingdom, prayer and happiness are connected.**

- **Happiness and joy are liturgical themes in the Church.**
- **The expression of spiritual joy is happiness.**
- **Pope Paul VI's Exhortation on Joy in the Lord, 1, April 9, 1975.**
  - Degrees of joy and happiness come from the satisfaction in position of some good which we recognize and love.
  - Spiritual satisfaction is the highest good and therefore brings the greatest happiness.
- **Followers of Christ understand and choose the path of spiritual happiness.**
  - Our prayer life and Sacramental life keeps in union with the source of the greatest happiness which is the possession of Christ in our hearts.
- **The question of personal happiness is an important one.**
  - It reveals the degree of union we have with Christ.
  - It indicates the believer's intentional choice of choosing spiritual happiness above the rest.
  - Through prayer and having a lifestyle where Christ and faith are first, we choose spiritual happiness as the highest good and the greatest satisfaction in our lives.
- **Happiness is a spiritual choice and responsibility.**

**Summary:** *The Kingdom of God is in you, and you have within your very own soul the capacity and the power through prayer and the Sacraments to touch the wellspring of peace and happiness Who is Jesus Christ. You can be happy no matter what. The power of happiness is a power you have. It is a power you choose to embrace. Happiness is a spiritual choice. Happiness is a spiritual choice and responsibility. Happiness comes from the inside out and begins with Jesus Christ Who is in us and Who we profess to be in us.*

## Pause for Time to Reflect:

**Point III: The marital relationship exemplifies happiness as a spiritual choice and responsibility, but the choice and responsibility for happiness applies to all vocations.**

- **Spouses who are experiencing challenges in their marriage often communicate distress with a simple statement, “I’m not happy.”**
  - As a spiritual mentor whom we are training, supporting the complaining spouse with the understanding of happiness as a spiritual responsibility and choice is key.
  - Each spouse in a marriage is responsible for their happiness, based on their marital vow, the vow they made on their wedding day to God, themselves, their spouse, in the presence of their family and friends.
  - Helping the mentee to take responsibility for their unhappiness in a marriage is a way for them to demonstrate the belief that we find in various places in the New Testament that all things are repairable in Christ, even a broken marriage.
- **Blaming the other spouse is the opposite of taking responsibility for one’s unhappiness in a marriage.**
  - Blaming reduces us to a helpless victim and denies the reality that happiness is a spiritual choice and responsibility.
- **God expects us to work through problems with courage and humility.**
- **Happiness in marriage happens when both spouses choose and are responsible for their personal happiness.**
- **Happiness is a personal responsibility and has at its ultimate depth a spiritual dimension, a belief in the power of God, and God’s love for us.**

**Summary:** *“Whether one is married or in a vowed relationship as a religious or priest, or single, the question of happiness is a spiritual responsibility, one that must be addressed whenever one loses it. Just as a spouse is obligated to accept and address their unhappiness, based on their vows, so it is true for any other vocation. Religious and priests must take responsibility for their happiness as they implicitly promised to God and those who came to the celebration of their ordination or profession day. Even single people by virtue of their Baptismal Promises are held responsible for their personal happiness found in Christ. For the Christian this obligation is rooted in our relationship with Christ. It is one of the cornerstones of a real spiritual life. It is fundamental for persevering and maintaining the vocation God gave us whether married, religious, priest or single.*

***This is one meaning when Jesus says to you and me,  
“Behold, the kingdom of God is among you.”***

