

Chapter 16

“But Our Citizenship Is in Heaven”

(Phil 3:20)

Are we really citizens of heaven? Are we law-abiding **subjects** of the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ? This is only accomplished for us **if we willingly subject ourselves** to live in the selfless love of God to the best of our ability, at all times, as Jesus Christ did. Then, and only then, will we understand and pray as we should, the way Jesus taught us “**Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**”

*“When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that **God may be all in all.**” (1 Corinthians 15:28)*

The Kingdom of God is being built up in this world, most directly in the Catholic Church, the Body of Christ, at work in this world in its members, who serve him by completing his work on earth, by bringing peace wherever they live, in Jesus Christ’s way of selfless, merciful, charitable love.

God has given people dominion over all things on earth. Unless they subject themselves willingly to God in love, and use all things, including their bodies, to please God, as he is always pleased, by the way Jesus Christ uses himself and all things to show great loving concern for his neighbor; and especially, for those who need the help the most, and are being ignored, and even despised by others. We are all called by our baptism, to complete this great work of merciful love begun by Jesus Christ, and experienced in his church, in the beginning, at Jerusalem.

*“Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. **There was not a needy person among them**, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.”(Acts 4:32-35)*

The church in Jerusalem is a model of Christian charity that should inspire every parish, religious order, and individual Christian, who sincerely and wholeheartedly desires, and prays for the help needed to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ, and in that way, experience themselves, and help others to experience the perfect peace and joy of Jesus Christ, in their hearts and minds, in every situation of life. Then, and only then, will any of us experience and understand that God

has answered our prayer and is establishing his kingdom on earth, in our hearts and minds.

A very difficult thing for any of us to accept, is that we are either subjects of Jesus Christ, by living in his way of love, which produces God's perfect and eternal heavenly life within us, or we are living in self-destructive, death dealing sin.

If we live in sin, we are deceived subjects of Satan who hates us, and helps us to destroy ourselves with our pride, selfishness, envy, greed, laziness, gluttony and lustfulness.

God has called us in Christ, to take up the cross daily. That means to do as Jesus did. Try to make some good thing happen, in some way, even when others are treating us badly. We have not been called to be treated kindly, or even fairly, by others in this world.

From the midst of a group of inmates in Coffield Unit, one of them asked me, "Is there any justice in this world?" My answer to this question was, "Not much". We may have good laws but, to enforce them, we will always have some judges and police who are mistreating their children, committing adultery, and in other ways treating those who should be most dear to them, unfairly. If they can't treat members of their own families with justice, how can we expect them to treat us any better.

What Jesus is trying to teach us, is to live in such a way that we will be able to find peace and happiness, in the midst of the troubles of life. He is realistic and his approach to life turns everything around for us, so we are not overcome by sadness and depression because of bad and unfair treatment received from anyone. We do experience these results in our lives at those times when we react to bad treatment of any kind in the way Jesus Christ teaches us.

The good fight in which we succeed in overcoming evil in our lives, is fought within ourselves. The spiritual approach which works for us is when someone makes life difficult for us; we don't give in to our first emotional response of anger, but instead remind ourselves that someone has given us a cross, an opportunity to show our belief in the way of living offered to us by God, in Jesus Christ. Then, we pray for whoever is doing us wrong and, also we thank God, for having given us, in Jesus Christ, the way to not become troubled, but rather, the way to keep ourselves calm and at peace, in the midst of the troubles of life.