



YEAR 8 – KINGDOM OF GOD

(UNIT 3 – WEEKS 1 AND 2)



INTRODUCTION

1. Three themes run throughout the Bible which symbolise humanity's search for the Kingdom of God.
2. These three themes consist of; Life and Death, Light and Darkness, Truth and Lies.
3. In Genesis 3 we see that human beings fall into *darkness* and *death* because of the serpent's *lie*.
4. Jesus comes to us as the 'Light of the World' meaning He is the Way back to Truth and to Life.
5. Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, the only way to the Father is through Me' (John 14: 6)
6. Jesus also tells us, '**I have come that you might have life and have it the full**' (John 10: 10).
7. It is in Jesus that we find fullness of life, truth and light... It is in Jesus that we see the Kingdom of God.



(John 15: 1-11)

Jesus says... 'I am the true vine'
Jesus explains that unless we live in Him and allow Him to live in us then we will never bear fruit. We will never be truly alive.



(John 14: 11)

'I am in my Father and my Father is in me'
Jesus explains that it is through Him that we are brought into the love of the Trinity. When we let Jesus live in our hearts we let God live in us too.

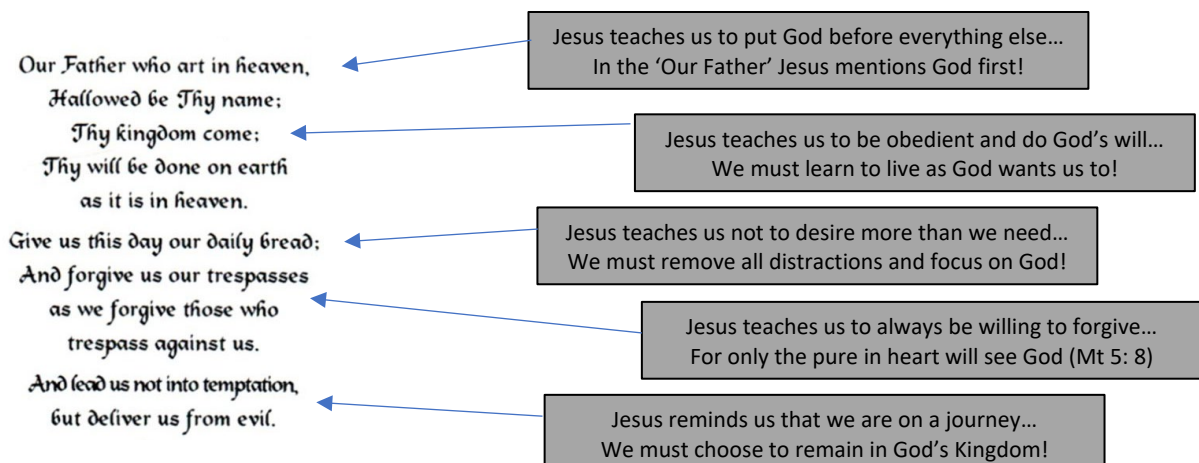
THE KINGDOM OF GOD

There is much debate as to what '**the Kingdom of God**' is. Some believe that 'the Kingdom' is something we enter when we die. This is also referred to as '**heaven**'. Others believe that the 'Kingdom' is a physical kingdom which needs to be established on Earth. This '**Holy Land**' has already begun with the city of '**Jerusalem**'. Some believe that 'the Kingdom' is something we find within ourselves. For others it is something we find through our **relationships** with others in **community**. Many Christians believe that the **Church** is the 'Kingdom of God' on Earth.

8. Jesus announces the Good News, 'The Kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe' (Mk 1: 51)
9. The Kingdom of God is not a geographical place... It is about accepting the reign of God in our lives.
10. Every parable Jesus ever shares with us is really about the 'Kingdom of God' and how we find it...

KINGDOM PRAYERS

11. Jesus teaches his followers to pray for the Kingdom in the **Sermon on the Mount** (Matthew 5-7)
12. Jesus explains that we must become holy... '**Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect**' (Mt 5: 48)
13. Jesus says, '**love your enemies**' (Mt 5: 44)... This goes further than any other religious teaching...
14. The Kingdom of God on Earth starts with Mary and Jesus. Their prayers about the Kingdom are below!



SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM

15. There are three signs that can be seen when we are allowing God's Kingdom to reign on Earth...
16. These three signs of the Kingdom are: i) **Peace**, ii) **Justice** and iii) **Reconciliation**...
17. All Christians should work to make these three things a reality and build God's Kingdom on Earth.
18. Jewish people believe that these three things will come with the beginning of the **Messianic Age**.
19. Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Kingdom of God has already come!

THE CHURCH

20. The Church is not a building... Rather it is the people or the community established by Jesus himself.
21. The Church *should* be a visible expression of Christ's love for the world... Nobody should feel excluded.
22. Jesus instituted *Peter* as first leader of the Church and imparted some of His authority to the Apostles.
23. Catholics believe this same authority rests with the Pope to this day because of **Apostolic Succession**.



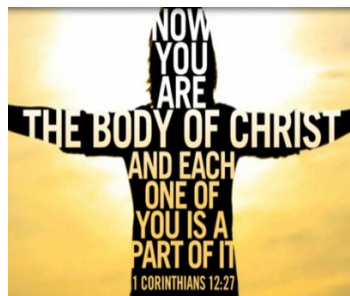
Pope Francis

"I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own

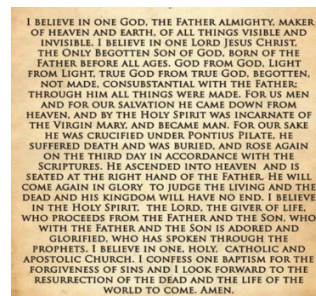
The authority of the Pope comes from Jesus himself when He chose Peter to be the first leader of the Christian community. The Pope is known as the '**Vicar of Christ**' meaning Christ's representative on Earth. The Pope is also known as the '**Pontiff**.' This is from the Latin phrase, '**Pontifex Maximus**' which means the '**Great Bridge Builder**.'



These **FOUR MARKS** define what the Church of Jesus should be.

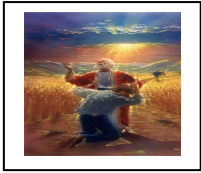


St Paul teaches that all members of the Church are important.



The Nicene Creed is the statement of faith for ALL Christians.

24. **Catholic Social Teaching** refers to the collective writings which show Catholics how they should live their lives.
25. Catholic Social Teaching (**CST**) began with the encyclical **Rerum Novarum** which spoke out for **workers' rights**.
26. **CST** is about **faith in action** and putting the most **vulnerable people** in society first... '**Concern for the poor**'
27. **CST** is about **stewardship** and respecting **human dignity**... It is about **standing against exploitation and greed**.



YEAR 8 – THE PARABLES OF JESUS CHRIST

(UNIT 3 – WEEKS 3 AND 4)



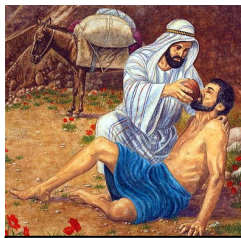
WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?

1. Jesus came to announce the **'Good News'** ('Gospel') that **'the Kingdom of God has come'** (Luke 4: 14-21).
2. To encounter the Kingdom of God we need to accept the words of Jesus and do our best to follow His example.
3. The teaching of Jesus is quite simple... We must **love God and love our neighbours as ourselves** (Mark 12: 30)
4. At first this sounds easy, but it soon feels impossible... How do we love those who mean to do us harm?
5. Jesus said, **'if anyone hits you on the right cheek, turn and offer him the other as well.'** (Matthew 5: 39)
6. Jesus taught that we must always be ready to forgive others as He did... **Forgiveness must be from the heart!**
7. Even as Jesus was crucified, He said... **'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'** (Luke 23: 34).

PARABLES YOU NEED TO KNOW...



Parable of the Sower



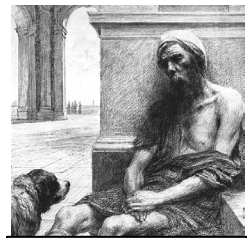
The Good Samaritan



Sheep and the Goats



The Prodigal Son



The Parable of Lazarus

WHAT ARE PARABLES?

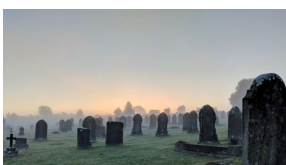
8. Throughout his ministry, Jesus spoke in **parables** (simple stories used to illustrate a spiritual or moral lesson).
9. Every parable Jesus gives to us is really about the nature and importance of the Kingdom of God.
10. Many parables speak of the **need to show God's love to all people**, particularly the **poor and marginalised**.
11. Some parables stress the **importance of mercy**... To forgive others unconditionally for things they have done.
12. Other parables Jesus gives are about judgement we will receive after death... This is known as **'eschatology'**.
13. It appears to be clear from the parables and resurrection of Jesus that some kind of life after death does exist.
14. Jesus speaks of judgement which leads to punishment for the wicked and reward for the worthy.

ESCHATOLOGY...

Christians begin with the teachings of Jesus when they consider what to believe about life after death. If Jesus really was God in the flesh, then it means that **everything Jesus taught us must be true**. This includes everything Jesus taught us about 'eternal life'. Jesus talks about life after death in the **parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man**. (Luke 16: 19-31) He also talks about life after death in the parable of **the Sheep and the Goats**. (Matthew 25: 31-46)



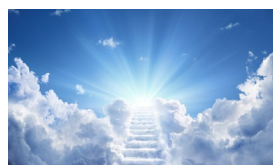
THE FOUR LAST THINGS...



Death



Judgement



Heaven



Hell

IMAGERY IN PARABLES...

15. Jesus, like many prophets from the Old Testament makes **use of images** when talking about 'the Kingdom'.
16. Jesus often uses **gardens, vineyards, seeds and trees** to show where true **life** is found, and faith can flourish.
17. Jesus often uses **birds, dogs, pigs and thorns** to symbolise the things of this world which lead us to **death**.
18. Many parables include **journeys**... Look out for sayings such as 'going down', 'a distant land' or 'returning'.
19. Jesus sometimes uses places such as **Jerusalem** to highlight when **God is present** in our lives.
20. Jesus will use places such as **Jericho and pig farms** to highlight what happens when **God is absent** in our lives.

Gardens are frequently used by Jesus when speaking about the Kingdom of God. You may recall the garden of Eden was where humanity enjoyed being in full communion with God. When we are present in the garden, and rooted in God, our lives can bare great fruit. Jesus says, 'I am the vine' (John 15). We must listen to his words if we wish to live in God and for God to live in us. Many parables speak of sowing seeds and trees bearing fruit. You may have heard of Jesus cursing a fig tree for not bearing fruit. This shows his frustration with Jerusalem.



Jesus sometimes talks of pig farms or being surrounded by dogs or birds. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Jewish man is knocked over the back of the head. These images show what happens to us in life when we distance ourselves from God. We lose a sense of who we are and begin to experience moments of darkness and despair. This sense of hell is often created by ourselves and the choices we make. The world around can feel overwhelming and start to eat away at us when we are not in a good place. Jesus calls for us all to repent in these moments and return to the love and mercy of God.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MARK 4: 1-20)



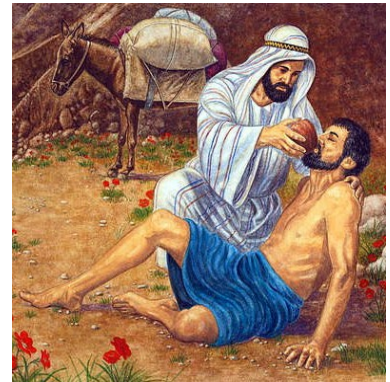
*Again, Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the **path**, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on **rocky places**, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among **thorns**, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on **good soil**. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."*

A Short Reflection...

This is the first parable Jesus tells. Interesting that he begins by sitting in a boat which **floats above water** and decides to talk about **life in a garden!** Remember, the words of Jesus are spirit and they are life. Jesus teaches that in order to have life we must listen to his words (**seeds**) and make our hearts like the **good soil**. If we harden our hearts (**the path**), if we only turn to God in times of trouble (**rocky places**) or put things of this world, such as money and reputation, before God (**thorns**) then our faith will never grow nor the Kingdom flourish within us.

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN (LUKE 10: 25-37)

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So, too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him', he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'



A Short Reflection...

To find the Kingdom of God we need to put others before ourselves. The priest would have seen himself as a 'holy' man. If he had stopped to help the man, he would have become 'unclean'. The priest puts his own holiness before the life of the man. The Levite did not help as he was more worried about his reputation. The Samaritan is the one person who had every reason not to help but chose to help anyway. Jesus uses this parable to teach us to look past our differences... Nobody is excluded from the Kingdom of God.

PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS (MATTHEW 25: 31-46)



Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

A Short Reflection...

Jesus teaches in this parable that we encounter God in EVERY person that we meet. It is easy to overlook certain people in our community. Do we treat all people in the same way we would treat Jesus Himself? Do we clearly see those in need around us? Perhaps somebody you know feels 'in prison' because they have no friends? Perhaps somebody you know 'needs clothes' as they feel humiliated or are being laughed at? Do we stand by and watch terrible things happen to others or do we reach out and stand up for them with love? Jesus teaches us to see the presence of God in the lonely, the vulnerable and the oppressed.



THE PRODIGAL SON (LUKE 15: 11-32)



A Short Reflection...

Jesus teaches in this parable that we all have a place in the Kingdom of God (house) but are free to reject it. God calls us into a **familial relationship** with Him where we can be our best selves. The parable teaches when we put ourselves first it results in us losing and forgetting our true selves. Jesus teaches that **we can rely on God's mercy**. No matter what we have done or what we have become, God always wishes for us to return to Him. Note at the end of the parable **that the older son is no longer inside the house**. He is unable to show mercy as the Father does. This is a warning to us all that we must learn to forgive from the heart to remain in the Kingdom of God.

*'There was a man who had two son. The younger one said to his father, **Father, give me my share of the estate.**' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a **distant country** and there squandered his wealth in **wild living**. After he had spent everything, there was a **severe famine** in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went out to a citizen of that country, who **sent him to his fields to feed pigs**. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of **my father's hired servants have food to spare**, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father... But **while he was a long way off**, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he **ran to his son**, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, '**Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.**' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. Meanwhile the older son was in the field. When he came near the house he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound. The **older brother became angry and refused to go in**. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 'My son,' the father said, '**you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.**'*

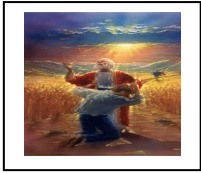
PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (LUKE 16: 19-31)

*'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was **carried away by the angels** to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In **Hades, where he was being tormented**, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for **I am in agony in these flames.**' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between us **a great chasm has been fixed**, so those who might want to pass from here to you cannot, and no one can cross from there to us.' He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may warn them, so they will not also come into this place of torment.' Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' He said, 'But Fr Abraham, if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, '**If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.**'"*



A Short Reflection...

Jesus appears to be warning us here not to ignore the poor and the marginalised. They will be first in the Kingdom of God. We will be held to account for our failings to help others and put their needs before ourselves.



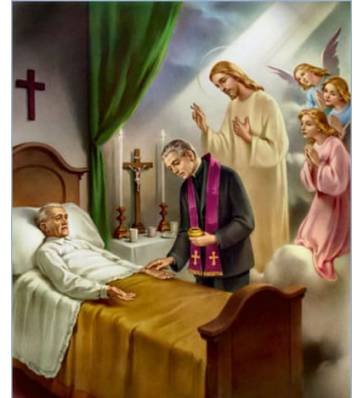
YEAR 8 – FAITH IN ACTION

(UNIT 3 – WEEKS 5 AND 6)



SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK...

A priest will start this rite by sprinkling the room and the person receiving the sacrament with **holy water** to remind them of their baptism. Using the **oil of the sick** the priest will **anoint the head and hands** of the sick person with the **sign of the cross**. Prayers are said as the priest **lays hands** on the person receiving the sacrament that they might receive the gifts of the **Holy Spirit**. An opportunity is made for **reconciliation**. The priest will **absolve** the person of their sins and bless them. The anointing of the sick is a **sacrament of healing**. It brings those suffering from fear and doubt into the Kingdom of God. If the person receiving this sacrament is in their final moments before death it is known as the **Last Rites**. The last **Holy Communion** called '**viaticum**' is offered meaning '**with you on the way.**'

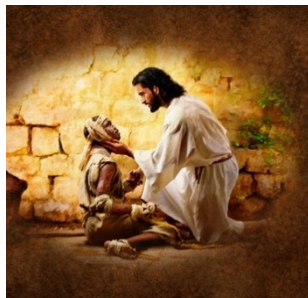


1. Every sacrament makes the invisible love of God visible to us... The sacrament of the sick is no different.
2. **Viaticum** is a very special moment for Catholics as they prepare to leave this world with Jesus Christ.
3. Viaticum marks the end of our journey in this world and the **start of a new journey** in God's eternal presence.
4. During the sacrament, the priest may read from the book of **Psalms** to remind the sick person of their faith.
5. The priest may also recite a **litany of the saints**... This reminds the sick person that they are not alone.
6. The priest will often choose a reading from Scripture which involves a story about Jesus healing somebody.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS...



Jesus always treated women as His equal... this was unheard of at this time
(see John 4)



Jesus reached out to and healed lepers and other 'unclean' people
(see Matthew 8)



Jesus associated with Romans and healed the servant of a Centurion
(see Luke 7)



Jesus ate and spent a lot of His time with tax collectors and sinners
(see Luke 19)

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS...

7. An important part Jesus' **ministry** was his performance of miracles. These broadly fall into four categories...
8. Jesus' miracles show his authority over... **nature**... **goodness and evil**... **sickness and health**... **life and death**.
9. One might read these stories literally. However, the miracles of Jesus often allude to a deeper meaning as well.
10. In each miracle, Jesus shows that the Kingdom of God is greater than any Earthly power or human authority.
11. Each miracle demonstrates the nature of God's Kingdom where **the last shall be first and first shall be last**.
12. Jesus can **take the dead** things of this world and **give them new life**... Jesus turns **water to wine** at Cana.
13. Jesus shows that the **new life** he brings **will never die**... Jesus **walks above the waters** and **raises Lazarus**.
14. If we trust in Jesus, we find that we have all that we need... **Jesus feeds the 5,000** with **5 loaves and 2 fish**.

Jesus Heals a Man Possessed by Evil Spirits (Mark 5: 1-20)



In this story, Jesus is taken to a man, believed to be extremely violent, chained up in a graveyard. He is said to be possessed by many demons who are named 'Legion'. When Jesus approaches the demons, they challenge him... **'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High?'** Jesus orders the demons out of the man and into a herd of pigs. The pigs run into the waters and drown. The man is healed and becomes a follower of Jesus. In this miracle, Jesus shows that evil is unable to prevail against the Kingdom of God he has come to establish on Earth.

Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter from the Dead (Mark 5: 36-42)

Jesus raises the dead three times across the Gospels. In this story, Jesus is on the way to see the young daughter of Jairus who is said to be dying. Jairus is the leader of the Synagogue. Before Jesus can reach the house, the daughter has died. Jesus reassures the leader... **'Do not fear, only believe.'** As Jesus entered, He asks **'Why are you weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.'** Jesus took the girl by the hand and said, **'Little girl, I say to you arise.'** Immediately the girl got up. In this miracle Jesus shows that faith in the Kingdom of God can overcome death.



Jesus Stills the Storm (Mark 4: 38-41)



In this story, Jesus is travelling across the sea as a great storm threatens to capsize the boat. Jesus sleeps through the panic but is eventually woken up by His disciples... **'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?'** Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea **'Peace! Be still!'** The wind ceased and there was a great calm. The disciples were filled with fear asking **'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'** In this miracle Jesus shows us that the Kingdom of God is far greater and more powerful than anything in this world.

Jesus Heals a Paralysed Man (Mark 2: 3-11)

At the time of Jesus, people believed that those with disabilities were cursed and being punished by God for their sins. When a paralysed man is brought before him, Jesus takes the opportunity to challenge these beliefs. He says, **'Son, your sins are forgiven'**. This caused anger and some began to accuse him of blasphemy saying, only God can forgive sins. Jesus challenges their prejudice towards the man asking, **'why do you question these things in your hearts?'** He then said, **'the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins'** and to the paralytic, **'Rise, pick up your bed, and go home.'**



*In each miracle Jesus reveals his **divinity** meaning his **godliness**'. Jesus has power and authority over all things (**omnipotence**). He shows mercy to all and shows that nobody should be excluded from the Kingdom of God (**omnibenevolence**). Jesus shows that he has the authority to forgive sins on Earth as the **Son of Man**'.*

THE WASHING OF FEET (JOHN 13:1-17)



Jesus gave some of His most important teachings during His Last Supper with His disciples. He taught them **to serve others** and **not to seek greatness** themselves. Washing the bottom of another person's feet was a job for the very lowest of servants at the time of Jesus. The bottom of the feet became dirty and contaminated through moving around. It was believed that this could make a person 'unholy' or 'unclean' unless it was washed off immediately. At first Peter refused to let Jesus lower Himself to this position but Jesus explained 'If I do not wash your feet, you can have no share with me.' (John 13: 8) Peter learns that being a part of **God's Kingdom** requires **humility**, recognising our **need for God** and finding **joy in the service of others**.

KINGDOM VALUES

15. True discipleship is about putting **God's will first**... Jesus taught us to pray to God saying, '**Thy will be done**'
16. Discipleship is also about working for **justice, peace and reconciliation**. These are known as '**Kingdom values**'
17. Standing up for kingdom values is not easy and many who have done so have lost their lives in the process.
18. Jesus warned that **discipleship is not easy** when he said, '**Take up your cross and follow me**' (Matthew 16: 24)
19. St Irenaeus asks us to make our choice... '**Wood of the Cross**' (Jesus) or '**Wood of the Tree**' (Adam and Eve)
20. Pope Francis shows what we can do to build the **Kingdom of God on Earth** and live by **Kingdom values** today...

Pope Francis spoke out for the poor and oppressed. He challenged the existence of nuclear weapons, worked for fair trade and called for action against climate change



Every year on Maundy Thursday Pope Francis washed the feet of prisoners to show them that they still have dignity and can be a part of God's Kingdom

THE SEVEN CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY...

The word **corporal** refers to **bodily** or **physical**. A dead body is referred to as a **corpse**. The Latin term for body of Christ in communion is '**Corpus Christi**'. The corporal works of mercy are things we can physically do for the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable. The Kingdom of God is more than a change of heart within us. This is where it might begin, but God's love is self-giving and needs to be shared with others. **Missio** is a Catholic charity which **supports 157 countries** and responds to the **world's most vulnerable people**. As St Paul says, '**we are one body, many parts.**' (1 Corinthians 12: 12)

Feed the Hungry
Give drink to the Thirsty
Clothe the Naked
Visit those in Prison
Comfort the Sick
Give shelter to the Homeless
Comfort the Dying



'Spread the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.'
(St Francis of Assisi)