

*The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is not rare,  
but occurs wherever folks serve and care.*

Every evening you and your family gather around the table or try to have a meal together. It doesn't matter what is eaten. What goes on is what counts. As everybody digs in, the table buzzes with the talk of tomorrow's soccer game, the school event, the latest fix-up project, the latest crisis at work, a new knock-knock joke. There at the table, parents and children, friends and relatives give and receive encouragement, consolation, forgiveness and love. Especially love. If there is one safe harbor on this earth, one secure, sheltered place where we are welcome always no matter how badly we mess up, it is the table of our shared evening meal. It is the place where Christ rules as King.

When a storm devastates a town, or a fire reduces a neighborhood to burnt timber and ashes (as in California), or an act of terrorism cuts a wide and

bloody swath through a community...that's when they go to work - skilled medical professionals, tireless construction workers, patient and gifted counselors, compassionate volunteers. These dedicated people work around the clock to care for the hurt and injured, rescue those in danger, help the traumatized cope, and begin the overwhelming work of rebuilding. By their very presence, these people transform such devastation into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

In the face of the economic slowdown, employers and employees work together to plan and cope, to share and to invent, to minimize job losses and to provide the best possible medical insurance coverage even in the face of rising costs...in all of these meetings and discussions, Christ is King in that Kingdom.

In the face of a family crisis, neighbors and relatives step in...and suddenly there's food and chances to talk and offers to babysit and all manners of help seem to come out of the woodwork. Christ is King in that neighborhood.

The tired, old downtown building has seen better days, but no better use. The city's churches have worked together to turn the brick structure into a community center, a safe place where children can come to play basketball, receive tutoring, or just hang

out after school. The well-stocked pantry provides for dozens of hungry families every week. The free clinic offers basic on-site medical care and referral services to the poor and uninsured. Its meeting rooms are always busy; the elderly have a place to go for companionship, and immigrants are taught how to master the language of their new homeland. In this austere, brick building, Jesus Christ reigns as King.

The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is not found in the world centers of power, but within human hearts that might work there in those centers of power. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is built not by deals among the power elite, but by compassionate hands. Christ reigns neither by influence nor wealth, but by generosity and justice. The politician figure like Pilate cannot grasp this “Kingship” of Jesus, but we who have been baptized in the life, death and resurrection of Christ are called to build and maintain that Kingdom in our own time and place. And it might surprise us how easily we are able to see the need and to step in and meet that need. It’s called God’s Spirit at work. The reign of Jesus Christ is realized only in our embracing the vision of humankind as a family made in the image of God, a vision of one another as brother and sister in Christ, a vision of the world centered in the spirit of hope and compassion taught by Jesus Christ.

A poem whose author remains unknown, written in the 16th century, reads this way:

“Thou shalt know him  
When He comes  
Not by din of drums  
Nor the vantage of His airs  
Nor by anything He wears  
Neither by His crown  
Nor His gown  
For His presence known shall be  
By the holy harmony  
That His coming makes in me.”

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