



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

16 June 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Kingdom of God \ˈkɪŋ-dəm ˈəv ˈɡäd\

Also, reign of God or kingdom of heaven. The spiritual realm over which God reigns, which transcends time and space. A central element to the teaching of Jesus.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-kingdom-of-god>

CONTEXT

As we live in anticipation of the fullness of the **Kingdom**, we have a responsibility to create a world more in keeping with the values of the reign of God. —*Helen Doohan*

The **kingdom of God** is where our best dreams come from and our truest prayers. We glimpse it at those moments when we find ourselves being better than we are and wiser than we know.

—*Frederick Buechner*

WHY IT MATTERS

Ancient Israel held hope in an eternal and universal restoration of the kingship of David. Mark, Matthew, and Luke all emphasize the **Kingdom's** arrival as the principal teaching of Jesus. Jesus proclaims the **Kingdom** in his preaching and in forgiving sins, casting out demons, and restoring the dead to life. Signs of the **Kingdom** include restored vision, hearing, mobility, good news for the poor, and much more. The **Kingdom** requires believers to be fully free, alert, and ready to move at the Spirit's prompting.

From *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World): "After we have obeyed the Lord, and in his Spirit nurtured the values of human dignity, brotherhood, and freedom, we will find them again when Christ hands over to the Father 'a **Kingdom** of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.' On this earth that **Kingdom** is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower."

RELATED WORDS

Signs | Messianic king | Son of David | City of God

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What does "Kingdom of God" mean?

The **kingdom of God** isn't "heaven"—that is, it's not where we go when we die. It's not even a place. **Kingdom** refers to God's rule. Jesus refers to the **Kingdom** as "among" us and "within" us—always within reach. We don't "get there" so much as abide in it where we are. We participate in the **Kingdom** in various ways: changing our hearts, working toward justice, protecting the vulnerable, and freeing the burdened. We pray for the **Kingdom** to come in the Lord's Prayer.

Jesus offers stories and metaphors for understanding the **Kingdom**: a sower, a mustard seed, a treasure, a banquet. Matthew's gospel references the **Kingdom** almost 50 times. John's gospel makes clear that the **Kingdom** isn't territory to be gained. It's where peace rules and oppression ends. No political system or social program can establish God's rule. We can't make "**Kingdom** come" by our own efforts. Yet we're summoned to enter more fully into the **Kingdom** by reshaping society to conform to its values.

—*Alice Camille, from Questions Catholics Ask <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-Kingdom-of-God>*

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (JUNE 16)

How the mustard seed has spiced up spiritual life

The tiny mustard seed adds flavor not only to a lot of foods but also to a number of religious stories. We are familiar with the gospel parable of the mustard seed, which Jesus used as a model for the **kingdom of God**. To teach humility Jewish texts compared the knowable universe to the size of a mustard seed. And the Quran states that no soul will suffer the least injustice on the Day of Judgment because even the equivalent of a mustard seed will be accounted for on God's scales of justice.

READINGS: Exodus 17:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Mark 4:26-34 (92 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/061624.cfm>). "To what shall we compare the **kingdom of God**? It is like a mustard seed."

FAITH IN ACTION

The next time you open a jar of mustard, pause for a moment and ponder the lessons it has taught.