

At the risk of sounding judgmental or condemnatory, I think it is fair to say that God is needed in our world.

This is more than the political state of our country, with the divisiveness and the fear mongering being spewed by the leaders.

This is more than the ongoing conflicts in Gaza and Israel, Ukraine, Sudan, and the violence in other countries.

This is more than the homeless challenge in our country and community; the lack of decent wages to support families.

It is families being torn apart, or tearing themselves apart.

It is people struggling with major illnesses and sicknesses.

It is people lost in depression and addictions.

It is youth hurting themselves for too many reasons.

That is all right here.

Some people's solution is to force "God" onto those in need: "follow ten commandments, let's make laws that enforce a certain approach to religion". Or we tell people to reject a certain way of life then "God will love you", we make God's love conditional.

Is this truly the correct approach? Is it a Gospel approach?

In last week's gospel Jesus had sent the disciples out on mission. They were to preach the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand so change our ways, change your thinking; heal the sick and expel demons." This was all positive, because Jesus' own preaching of the Kingdom was about God's love and God's care for all. People were invited to change their mode of thinking to see this. The Kingdom breaking through was demonstrated by healing and forgiving; by welcome. This is what the disciples did too.

And it worked!

So successful were the disciples that people started to follow them, literally. Chasing them into the desert, because they needed more; they needed more of the message, more healing, more care.

And Jesus responds to this, he sees this and it affects him emotionally.

The word “pity” is not a good translation because for us in our day and time, “pity” tends to be more negative. The original word is about a hard emotional response that he feels in his gut. He has a gut check, we might say, at the sight of so many in need; who hunger for more love, more care, more wisdom. It got to his core that he witnessed so many in need, so many apparently lost. So much so there was no time for rest... the need was greater than the rest.

Jesus reveals, through this preaching, his actions, his very being, that God’s presence, God’s reign are in those moments of healing, of welcoming, of forgiveness; those moments of compassion, pity, generosity; in those moments in which we give of ourselves for the sake of others.

We live in God’s kingdom as we heal, as we welcome, as we forgive and ask for forgiveness; in moments of compassion, generosity, true pity, in moments of humility.

If we want others then too become aware of God’s Kingdom, and if we want to invite them to follow too, then we must be inviting. We must showing healing, welcoming, merciful...

It is not in harboring grudges and trying to punish others. It is not in cruel words and hate filled diatribes. It is not in rejection and selfishness, nor in ignoring those around us who are in need. It is not in force nor passive aggression.

Each week we come to our Eucharist to give thanks to God for God’s reaching out to us; to God’s own humility is sending the Son and the Son’s own humility in dying for us; we give thanks for the forgiveness of our sins that we believe the Father gives; and we eat and drink of the Son, so as to remember this all, and to make it real in our lives.

How will we heal this week?

Whom will we forgive this week? Or from whom will we ask for forgiveness?

How will we see the good in others this week?

How will we reveal God's presence this week?

How will we invite others to experience the love of God?