

Nineteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

August 12, 2007

Wisdom 18:6-9, Hebrew 11:1-2, 8-19, Luke 12:32-48

Homilist: S. Mary Mark Schoenstein, OP

We live by faith and walk in hope and so God's kingdom comes. In the words of the opening prayer today we cry "Increase your Spirit within us and bring us to our promised inheritance." Just as Abraham, as we are told in the Second Reading of today's liturgy, had to hope against hope that he would live to see the abundant progeny promised him, so must we cling to God's promise of a kingdom of love, justice and peace in Jesus Christ despite all evidence to the contrary.

Our Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 33, speaks so eloquently of the blessing of that kind of hope: "See the eyes of the Lord are upon ... those who hope for his kindness" and "Our soul waits for the Lord who is our help and our shield." Though we in our day are surrounded by a world of violence, death and destruction our faith enables us to continue to walk in hope that by God's grace and our cooperation the promised kingdom will come — no, is already here despite all the odds against it. And so we pray: "May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you."

In his letter to the Hebrews Paul says of the early patriarchs "They did not receive what had been promised but saw it and greeted it from afar." How deeply our faith calls us to hope that all our efforts are already bearing hidden fruit — that God is seeing to the building up of God's kingdom — that even as we struggle in our day to respond to the gift of God's lavish and faithful outpouring of grace, we are already part of the kingdom here, but not yet. Not yet in its fullness, but definitely here. Our lives and the lives of all those who have gone before us in faith are part of the fulfillment of the kingdom here and now and yet to come.