

Healing as Jesus' Calling Card Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday,
July 12, 2017 8:15 AM Gn 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a; **Mt 10:1-7** (The kingdom of
God is about surrender of our own control over our lives and even the life of the world.)

“The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

The “kingdom of heaven” is a term found only in Matthew’s Gospel; the other gospels refer to it as the “kingdom of God.” This has to be distinguished from all earthly kingdoms because in Jesus’ way of referring to it, **it isn’t political**. Now it did have a political meaning among the Jews of his day, especially among the party called the Zealots. And even one of his disciples was a zealot. The fact that one is picked out as a zealot is more or less a sign the rest weren’t and that he wasn’t. So the theory that floats around today, again you might say, it’s come and gone many times, that Jesus was really working for some sort of earthly, political kingdom, which he called the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, that is very unlikely, extremely improbable, **even though it was the desire of a rather large and significant group within Israel at that time**.

Jesus rather is thinking about **freeing people**, not from Roman authority as the zealots did, but **from unclean spirits and diseases and illnesses**. That was his carrying card; **that was his way of addressing people with the idea of the kingdom of heaven**. The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of freedom from all these forms of oppression, here primarily physical but also mental and spiritual ailments.

Now when we think about this it is very important that we get this right, that we understand that **God’s will is for us to be free of these ailments**. Now that freedom is not necessarily going to come about through instantaneous miracles. They have at various times and places, but that’s not the ordinary way in which these evils are confronted. **Ordinarily we confront them through all of the means that we have at our disposal, including the power of prayer, but not only**.

Now my grandfather was Christian Scientist. For Christian Scientists only the power of prayer is to be used in disease, no medicine, no doctors, no operations. This is not the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact always in the history of Christianity **we have esteemed the medical professions, the nursing professions**, always. We have held them up. In fact many religious orders primarily have busied themselves about the healing and the nursing professions. In the early Church one of the principal roles of the deacon in the Church was to attend to the healing of the sick. So, yes, **we believe in prayer, but we believe also in human ingenuity and human activity and the practice of the sciences and arts for the healing of the human person.**

And this is the way in which, this is as you might say the front or **the calling card that Jesus wanted to be presented to the world.** It's not that the kingdom of God is exclusively or even primarily about the healing of the human person, but that's the calling card. **That's the way it enters into the life of the world. Having once entered, the kingdom of God is like a seed that grows and matures in ways that we cannot foresee** because ultimately **the kingdom of God is about surrender of our own control over our lives and even the life of the world**, and surrender that to a higher power, namely, the wisdom and the goodness that Jesus reveals as divine. **This surrender is possible**, and it's because this is possible that **the world really does have hope or can have hope for the future.** However without this surrender, the future of the world is very dire and grim. Christians are called on to join with the twelve in making this very clear to our fellow travelers on the path of life.