

Part 2: The Charter of the Kingdom

In the earlier chapters, we selected readings from the Gospels according to John and Luke. However, in Part 2, the readings will almost exclusively be from the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew was placed at the beginning of the New Testament and was widely used by the Church in the early centuries in the formation of catechumens. From his Infancy to the Passion of Christ, this Gospel tells the story of Jesus in five sequential scenes based on a single scheme:⁵ Each scene has a discourse by Jesus, which follows carefully selected events paving the way to the teaching of the Master. All the discourses are in the words of Jesus and end with the following or similar words: “When Jesus had finished these parables he left the district” (7:28; 11:1; 13: 53; 19: 1; 26:1). The discourses or parables are as follows: The Charter of the Kingdom (Mt 5-7); the Message of the Kingdom (Mt 10); the Mystery of the Kingdom (Mt 13); the People of the Kingdom (Mt 18); the Coming of the Kingdom (Mt 24-25).

The first scene (Mt 3-5) of the public life of Jesus describes key events respectively in (Mt 3) and (Mt 4): the Baptism of the Lord in the River Jordan; his victory over the devil at the end of His 40-day long fast in the wilderness; the calling of the first four Apostles and a summary of His works in Galilee. Mt 5-7 tells of the first Sermon on the Mount by Jesus to his disciples and to the masses, the most important teachings of Jesus, a summary of the New Kingdom plan and the basic idea of the life and behaviour of a disciple of the Kingdom.

This course does not have sufficient space or time to elaborate on the readings and interpretation of all sacred texts, but we would encourage the reader to read the entire Gospel at home. For the purposes of this course, the first scene from the public life of Jesus focuses on John the Baptist and the first major event of the life of Jesus – His baptism. The scene describes the mystery of the Trinity present at the River Jordan and the significance of the baptism of Christ at the age of 30. The Sermon on the Mount deals with the Beatitudes, the importance of Christian prayer, fasting and charity and God’s care of man, which leads to us know about the Person of God the Father.

The second chapter of the book deals with the Charter of the Kingdom desired by Jesus, accomplished through His baptism and teachings. Let the Charter of the Kingdom be the basis of our life and the law of our new place in the Christian community.