

HOMILY: 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C
21st August, 2016
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Jesus doesn't answer the question put to Him in this Sunday's Gospel. It profits us nothing to speculate on how many will be saved. What we need to know is what He tells us today—how to enter into salvation and how urgent it is to strive now, before the Master closes the door.

Jesus is "the narrow gate," the only way of salvation, the path by which all must travel to enter the kingdom of the Father (see John 14:6).

In Jesus, God has come—as He promises in this week's First Reading - to gather nations of every language, to reveal to them His glory.

Eating and drinking with them, teaching in their streets, Jesus in the Gospel is slowly making His way to Jerusalem. There, Isaiah's vision will be fulfilled: On the holy mountain He will be lifted up (see John 3:14), will draw to Himself brethren from among all the nations - to worship in the heavenly Jerusalem, to glorify Him for His kindness, as we sing in Sunday's Psalm.

In God's plan, the kingdom was proclaimed first to the Israelites and last to the Gentiles (see Romans 1:16; Acts 3:25-26), who in the Church have come from the earth's four corners to make up the new people of God (see Isaiah 43:5-6; Psalm 107:2-3).

Many however will lose their place at the heavenly table, Jesus warns. Refusing to accept His narrow way they will weaken, render themselves unknown to the Father (see Isaiah 63:15-16).

We don't want to be numbered among those of drooping hands and weak knees (see Isaiah 35:3). So we must strive for that narrow gate, a way of hardship and suffering - the way of the beloved Son.

As this week's Second Reading reminds us, by our trials we know we are truly God's sons and daughters. We are being disciplined by our afflictions, strengthened to walk that straight and narrow path—that we may enter the gate, take our place at the banquet of the righteous.