

Wednesday of the Thirtieth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 13:22-30): Jesus passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, “Lord, will only a few people be saved?” He answered them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’ He will say to you in reply, ‘I do not know where you are from.’ And you will say, ‘We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.’ Then he will say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!’ And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the Kingdom of God. For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

“Strive to enter through the narrow gate”

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Today, on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus stops for a moment and someone takes advantage of it to ask him: “Lord, will only a few people be saved?” (Lk 13:23). It seems that, by listening to Jesus' words, the man has become exceedingly worried. It goes without saying that His doctrine is marvelous and appealing; but it entails some demands, which are not so attractive any more. But, should this man live the Gospel according to his own liking, with a “customized moral”, what would his

salvation probabilities be?

Ask, therefore: “Lord, will only a few people be saved?” Jesus does not accept this approach. Our salvation is too serious a subject to overcome it with a calculation of probabilities. “The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard “delay,” but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2Pet 3:9).

Jesus replies: “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’ He will say to you in reply, ‘I do not know where you are from.’” (Lk 13:24-25). How can these sheep belong to His own flock if they do not even follow the Good Shepherd, nor do they abide by the Magisterium of the Church? “Depart from me, all you evildoers!’ And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (...) and you yourselves cast out.” (Lk 13:27-28).

Neither Jesus nor the Church are afraid of tarnishing our Father God’s image when they reveal the mystery of hell. As the Catechism of the Church asserts, “The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a call to the responsibility incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent call to conversion” (n. 1036).

Let's stop “being too clever by half” and making so many calculations. Let's hurry up to enter by the narrow gate, restarting as many times as needed, and trusting in His mercy. Saint Josemaria says “All that which worries you for the moment, is of relative importance. What is of absolute importance is that you be happy, that you be saved.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“O hidden Jesus, Love eternal, You who are our life, O Divine Madman, for You have forgotten

Yourself and see only us. Why is it that so few people know you? Why is your Love not requited? O Love Divine why do You conceal Your beauty?" (Saint Faustyna Kowalska)

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“The passage to eternal life is open to all, but it is ‘narrow’ because it is demanding: it requires commitment, self-denial and the mortification of one's selfishness.” (Benedict XVI)

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