

## GOSPEL

LUKE 13:22-30

Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, 'Sir, will there be only a few saved?' He said to them, 'Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.

'Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, "Lord, open to us" but he will answer, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will find yourself saying, "We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets" but he will reply, "I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!"

'Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And men from the east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

'Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Pope Francis reminds us in his reflection that Jesus also in scripture refers to himself as - 'the door'. How does this help you understand and respond to this Gospel reading?
2. What are the things we have inside of us that prevent us from entering the narrow door?
3. How might you respond to the urgency of the words of Jesus in this Gospel passage?

## A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS

Today's Gospel passage urges us to meditate on the topic of salvation. St Luke the Evangelist tells us that while Jesus was travelling to Jerusalem, he was approached by a man who asked him this question: "Lord, will those who are saved be few?". Rather than giving a direct answer, Jesus shifts the issue to another level in an evocative way, which the disciples don't understand at first: "strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able". Using the image of a door, he wants his listeners to understand that it is not a question of numbers — how many will be saved — how many is not relevant, but rather, it is important for everyone to know the way that leads to salvation.

This way means entering through a door. But where is the door? Who is the door? Jesus himself is that door. He says so in the Gospel of John: "I am the door" (10:9). He leads us to communion with the Father, where we find love, understanding and protection. But why is this door narrow, one might ask? Why does he say it is narrow? It is a narrow door not because it is oppressive, but because it demands that we restrain and limit our pride and our fear, in order to open ourselves to Him with humble and trusting hearts, acknowledging that we are sinners and in need of his forgiveness. This is why it is narrow, to limit our pride, which swells us. The door of God's mercy is narrow but is always open to everyone! God does not have preferences, but

always welcomes everyone, without distinction. A narrow door to restrain our pride and our fear; a door open wide because God welcomes us without distinction. And the salvation that He gives us is an unending flow of mercy that overcomes every barrier and opens surprising perspectives of light and peace. The door is narrow but always open wide: do not forget this.

Once more, Jesus extends a pressing invitation to us today to go to Him, to pass through the door of a full, reconciled and happy life. He awaits each one of us, no matter what sins we have committed, to embrace us, to offer us his forgiveness. He alone can transform our hearts, He alone can give full meaning to our existence, giving us true joy. By entering Jesus' door, the door of faith and of the Gospel, we can leave behind worldly attitudes, bad habits, selfishness and narrow-mindedness. When we encounter the love and mercy of God, there is authentic change. Our lives are enlightened by the light of the Holy Spirit: an inextinguishable light!

I would like to propose something to you. Let us think now for a moment, in silence, of the things that we have inside us which prevent us from entering the door: my pride, my arrogance, my sins. Then, let us think of the other door, the one opened wide by the mercy of God who awaits us on the other side to grant us forgiveness.

The Lord offers us many opportunities to be saved and to enter through the door of salvation. This door is an occasion that can never be wasted: we don't have to give long, erudite speeches about salvation, like the man who approached Jesus in the Gospel. Rather, we have to accept the opportunity for salvation. Because at a certain moment, the master of the house will rise and shut the door, as the Gospel reminded us. But if God is good and loves us, why would he close the door at a certain point? Because our life is not a video game nor a television soap opera. Our life is serious and our goal is important: eternal salvation.

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Let us ask the Virgin Mary, the Gate of Heaven, to help us seize the opportunities the Lord gives us in order to cross the threshold of faith and thus to enter a broad path: it is the path of salvation that can embrace all those who allow themselves to be enraptured by love. It is love that saves, the love that already on this earth is a source of happiness for all those who, in meekness, patience and justice, forget about themselves and give themselves to others, especially to those who are most weak.

## **REFLECTION QUESTION**

- What has struck you from this reflection by the Holy Father?

## **PRAYER**

*Spend some time in prayer  
with one another*

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.