

Theme: **PERSEVERE TO ENTER THE NARROW GATE!**

**21st Sunday in Ordinary Time**

24 August 2025

1

There is a poignant story entitled "THE **NARROW GATE**" that resonates deeply with the gospel message. Miguel lived in a quaint village where a church bell tolled every Sunday, beckoning the faithful to prayer. He'd often stroll by, exchanging polite nods with the priest, but never mustered the courage to step inside. "One day, I'll find time for God," he'd tell himself, as the demands of work, friendships, and comfort consumed his life.

One fateful evening, the priest announced a special vigil, warning that the church doors would be locked at sunset. Those who wished to enter had to arrive before the bell tolled. Miguel, engrossed in market chatter with friends, kept delaying his departure. As twilight deepened, he finally sprinted with anticipation. He saw the warm glow of candles within, heard the soft murmur of prayers, and reached for the door-only to find it shut. "**It's me, Miguel! Let me in!**" he pleaded, but the voice from within responded, "**We don't know you. You never walked with us, never joined in prayer.**" Miguel stood alone in the darkness, realizing too late that the narrow window of opportunity had slipped away.

This story echoes the gospel passage from St. Luke 13:22-30. Where Jesus teaches that the path to salvation is narrow and demands efforts from each individual. As Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem, someone asked him, "Lord, **will only few people be saved?**" Jesus sidestepped the question, instead sharing three parables that underscored the importance of personal response and dedication. "**STRIVE TO ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE,**" he urged, emphasizing that salvation isn't reserved for the masses or guaranteed by birthright or baptism. Rather, it's a daily choice to live by His teachings, to walk the path of righteousness.

The second parable, that of the locked door, warns against procrastination and complacency. Merely sharing meals with Jesus, listening to His words, or being taught by Him isn't enough one must live every moment in accordance with His teachings. To those who fail to do so, the Master will say, "**I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers.**" The third parable highlights that salvation isn't exclusive to any nation or group; it's a universal call, as God says through Isaiah, "**I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory.**" Jesus' ministry embodied this message, as many Gentiles were among the first to accept Him.

St. Paul's exhortation in the second reading (Heb 12:5-13) underscores the importance of discipline in our journey towards salvation. Quoting Proverbs, he reminds us, "**For whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; he scourges every son he acknowledges.** Though discipline may

seem painful at first, it ultimately yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. The challenges we face are part of this discipline, training us to remain

2

faithful in responding to God's call. This discipline is the "narrow gate" that leads to eternal life.

A story about a wealthy woman who reached heaven illustrates this point beautifully. She was shown a modest mansion, and when she objected, she was told, "***That's the house you prepared for yourself.***" She admired a grander mansion across the way, belonging to her gardener, and asked how he merited such a dwelling. The answer was profound: "***The houses here are built from materials sent up from earth. We don't choose them; you do, through your earthly faithfulness.***" As we discipline ourselves, with God's grace, we can remain faithful and build a mansion of eternal significance.

But the question isn't whether only a few will be saved; it's whether we'll discipline ourselves to respond faithfully to God's call, every moment, every day. With His help, we can attain salvation and build a lasting legacy in heaven. Will ***we persevere to enter the narrow gate?*** The choice is ours, and the journey begins not tomorrow but now.