



24 August 2025

21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year C

## *The Challenge to Enter through the “Narrow Gate”*

**M**odern psychology gives great importance to “feeling good” and “loving one’s self” as a precondition to love others. But in today’s Gospel passage, Jesus warns us that there is no easy way to be his disciples as He declares that the Kingdom of God can be “accessed” only through a “narrow gate.” Discipleship is never meant to be the equivalent of “looking out for number one.”

Obviously, Jesus is not speaking of a material gate but of the “narrow gate” of daily faithfulness to one’s duties and the loyal observance of God’s law in all circumstances of life.

That is what makes life challenging, but that is also the only way that leads to eternal happiness in heaven.

In this Eucharist, let us ask for the grace to have the moral strength to choose the “narrow gate” of keeping God’s commandments in preference to the wide gate of self-entitlement, self-indulgence and other forms of self-gratification.



### **INTRODUCTORY RITES**



#### **Entrance Antiphon**

*(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)*

**Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. (Cf. Ps 86 (85):1-3)**

#### **Greeting**

**P** –The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All** – And with your spirit.

#### **Penitential Act**

**P** –Brethren, let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

**P** –You were sent to heal the contrite of heart, Lord, have mercy.

**All** –Lord, have mercy.

**P** –You came to call sinners, Christ have mercy.

**All** – Christ, have mercy.

**P** –You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, Lord, have mercy.

**All** –Lord, have mercy.

**P** –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All** – Amen.

#### **Gloria**

**All** – Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty

Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

#### **Collect (Opening Prayer)**

**P** –O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose, grant your people to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, amid the uncertainties of this world, our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.

Through our Lord Jesus

Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

*All—Amen.*

## LITURGY OF THE WORD



**1st Reading** *Is 66:18-21*  
*Through the prophet Isaiah, today the Lord reminds us that His plan encompasses all human beings and cultures. We, too, are part of that wonderful plan conceived by God's immense love for all.*

**R** —A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

**Thus says the Lord: "I know their works and their thoughts, and I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory. I will set a sign among them. I will spare some of them and send them to the nations: to Tarshish, Put and Lud, Mo-soch, Tubal and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have never heard of my fame, or seen my glory; and they shall proclaim my glory among the nations.**

**They shall bring all your brothers and sisters from all the nations as an offering to the Lord, on horses and in chariots, in carts, upon mules and dromedaries, to Jerusalem, my holy mountain," says the Lord, "just as the Israelites bring their offering to the house of the Lord in clean vessels.**

**Some of these I will take as priests and Levites," says the Lord.**

The Word of the Lord.  
*All—Thanks be to God.*

### Responsorial Psalm

*Ps 117:1.2*

**R** —*Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.*

*R. M. Velez*



**\* Praise the Lord, all you nations; glorify him, all you peoples! R.**

**\* For steadfast is his kindness toward us, and the fidelity of the Lord endures forever. R.**

**2nd Reading** *Heb 12:5-7.11-13*  
*The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that the difficulties and sufferings we have to endure in life are ways through which God disciplines us as His children, for our greater good.*

**R** —A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

**Brothers and sisters,**

**You have forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as children: "My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines. He scourges every son he acknowledges."**

**Endure your trials as "discipline." God treats you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? At the time, all discipline seems a cause not for joy but for pain, yet later it brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it.**

**So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed.**

The Word of the Lord.  
*All—Thanks be to God.*

**Gospel Acclamation** *Jn 14:6*

*All—Alleluia, alleluia.*

**"I am the way, the truth, and the life," says the Lord; "no one comes to the Father, except through me."**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel** *Lk 13:22-30*  
*The possibility of belonging to*

*the Kingdom of heaven is open to all, but subject to a basic condition: to live a life according to the teaching of Jesus. That is the "narrow gate" that leads to everlasting life.*

**P** —The Lord be with you.

*All—And with your spirit.*

**P** —A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke  
*All—Glory to you, O Lord.*

**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."**

The Gospel of the Lord.  
*All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

### Homily

#### Profession of Faith

*(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)*

*All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.*

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow*)\* **and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**\* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### Prayer of the Faithful

**P** –Mindful of the difficulties we all encounter in life as we try to pass through the “narrow gate” of a genuine Christian life, let us ask for the Lord’s merciful help.

**All–Lord, graciously hear us!**

**C** –For the Church, the home of all peoples: May she welcome all cultures and traditions in order to purify and enrich them with the values of the Gospel. Let us pray. **R.**

**C** –For the Holy Father and all bishops: May they be ever more signs and instruments of God’s love for all human beings, in their pastoral undertakings. Let us pray. **R.**

**C** –For all those who experience the difficulty of living according to the Gospel: May they

find comfort in the thought that God rewards everyone according to one’s efforts. Let us pray. **R.**

**C** –For our community: May every member feels appreciated and supported in one’s constant effort to live according to the teaching and example of the Master. Let us pray. **R.**

**P** –God our Father, we thank You for making us Your sons and daughters in Jesus, our Brother, Model and Savior. Sustain us in our effort to get closer to You through the “narrow gate” of a constant obedience to Your will. We ask this through Him, who lives and care for ever and ever. **All–Amen.**

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



### Preparation of the Gifts

**P** –Pray, brethren . . .

**All–May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

### Prayer over the Offerings

**P** –O Lord, who gained for yourself a people by adoption through the one sacrifice offered once for all, bestow graciously on us, we pray, the gifts of unity and peace in your Church.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All–Amen.**

### Preface VI

**P** –The Lord be with you.

**All–And with your spirit.**

**P** –Lift up your hearts.

**All–We lift them up to the Lord.**

**P** –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All–It is right and just.**

**P** –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in you we live and move and have our being, and while in this body we not only experience the daily effects of your care, but even now possess the pledge of life eternal.

For, having received the first fruits of the Spirit, through whom you raised up Jesus from the dead, we hope for an everlasting share in the Paschal Mystery.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration, we acclaim:

**All–Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

### Memorial Acclamation

**P** –The mystery of faith.

**All–We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

## COMMUNION RITE



**All–Our Father . . .**

**P** –Deliver us, Lord . . .

**All–For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.**

### Sign of Peace

### Breaking of the Bread

**All–Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2×)**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.**

### Communion

**P** –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

**All–Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

### Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

**The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart. (Cf. Ps 104 (103): 13-15)**



### Prayer after Communion

**P** –Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All–Amen.**



**P** –The Lord be with you.

**All–And with your spirit.**

**P** –Bow down for the blessing.  
(Pause)

–May the Lord grant you a renewed heart that you may follow Him with greater fidelity.

**All–Amen.**

**P** –May He strengthen you in the hardships of life that you may overcome them all in the power of the Cross.

**All–Amen.**

**P** –May the Lord protect you from all harm and lead you to everlasting life.

**All–Amen.**

**P** –And may almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**All–Amen.**

**P** –Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!

**All–Thanks be to God.**

## CALLED, GATHERED, DISCIPLINED, AND SENT

Kalakbay at Katoto

Isaiah's vision speaks of a great ingathering of people *"from all nations" "of every language" who "shall come and see [God's] glory."* The passage from the letter to the Hebrews speaks of *"discipline"* (the original meaning has to do more with *"instruction"*), and acknowledges said discipline to be a source, not so much of joy, as of pain, but which *"brings the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it."* **Discipline, in other words, appears to come more easy and more acceptable for one who gets training.** (The word for *"training"* has to do with the root-word for gymnastics). The Gospel, for its part, further affirms the overriding images of the first two readings, by alluding to the need for Christ's followers *"to strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many [...] will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."*

At a time in history when people go through all imaginable lengths to get what they want, what they dream of, and long for, above everything else ... with top seeded athletes enduring hours-long stretches of *"training"* and rigorous *"discipline"* day after grueling day ... when even terrorists spend years *"casing"* their targets carefully and meticulously ... when a social media culture of individualism, one-upmanship, and unbridled competition is the run of the day, it definitely sounds refreshing and reinvigorating to hear something that seems to reinforce that which we are already good at – competing, trying to get to the top of the heap, pushing, shoving, or otherwise clawing one's way to the pinnacle of our earthly desires.

Ever since the philosopher Descartes, and his

famous declaration *"Cogito, ergo sum"* (I think, therefore, I am!), which became the banner headline and war-cry of a movement called the **"enlightenment,"** *"going for the gold,"* *"pulling one's own strings,"* *"going out and grabbing for oneself,"* and *"being number one"* became apparently the *"right thing"* to do, the foundation stones for *"rugged individualism"* pushed to the extreme.

**So what is wrong with disciplining and training oneself in order to become top dog? Nothing in and of itself ...** Except that if it becomes the end in itself, if clawing one's way to the top is the end all and be all of one's existence, and if everything and everyone else is sacrificed on the altar of one's search for the holy grail of individual and personal success and fulfillment, then all this becomes vanity ... all is vanity ... Today's readings, furthermore, tell us we are off the mark ... way, way off.

Let us unpack a bit the meaning of today's readings. First, Isaiah tells us that the proper starting point is not our personal dream, but that of God's. God's vision, in addition, is one of a great ingathering of peoples and nations. This is not the language of individualism and narrow, personal concerns. Nor is this the language of exclusivity, but one of inclusivity. Second, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us that this search for the common good, this concern for others, and this drive to *"go out to all the world [to] tell the good news"* is fraught with a lot of trials and, therefore, needs *"discipline."* Still more, this discipline may cause a lot of pain. Third, Jesus reminds us that discipleship entails hard work, and that those who are first now will not necessarily keep their title at the end of time. *"For behold,*



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*some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."*

**It is very clear that the need for discipline and training is framed in the context of God's vision for the world.** It is clear that the Christian calling to discipleship is primarily a call to social relatedness, to social responsibility, in the context, not of individualism and a self-centered spirituality, but one that starts and ends with the idea of everyone's belongingness to a community called and gathered by God Himself.

In our times, encouraged as we are by a technosavvy individualistic culture, and by social media and round-the-clock entertainment to "do our own thing," and "look out for oneself," religion and spirituality become highly personal and private matters that need not be talked about in public. **God becomes a personal commodity to be sought for on one's own, at one's own convenience, at one's own style and pacing.** For a great many, this translates to a God that is conveniently and effectively kept "at arm's length," in one's closet, in the privacy of one's home, to be consulted only as needed, when convenient, when strictly necessary. For those in the opposite extreme, who are very religious, but who subscribe to an idea of an equally personal and deeply private faith, "discipline" and "training" get reduced to "pietistic" practices and personal devotions. Their faith never gets beyond what at times may be deemed fanatical and misguided attachments to popular devotions, statues, and images. For the former, God is a personal commodity to be called on as needed. For the latter, God is an intensely private source of solace and consolation, and faith is nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else but private, personal devotion. For such people, personal holiness means spending all-night vigils,


doing endless reparatory prayers for "sinners all over the world," and trying to appease an angry God whose hands are poised to strike the world in punishment.

But today's readings, and Biblical data as a whole, simply do not support such extremes of living one's faith. At bottom, both approaches are extremely individualistic, and self-centered. Both are really based solely on individuals' dreams for themselves. Both lose sight of God's dream for the world, for all of humanity, including those from whom we might never expect much, at least initially – the foreigners, "*people from the east and the west, and from the north and the south.*"

**Today, therefore, is a good time to be reminded of the Catholic Church's "best-kept secret" – the catholic social teachings.** In essence, following very clear Biblical data, said teachings remind us that we all are called to be holy, yes – but holiness in and through our relational selves, in and through our social selves. Holiness, thus, is not a mere pious endeavor, that reduces Christian life to personal prayers and personal devotions, and mere ritualistic attendance at Masses on Sundays. Holiness, in addition, is not mere personal sanctification, but a participation in God's dream for humankind, for the world, for society. Holiness, is a participation in the mission of social transformation, in sharing in the "*joys, the hopes, the anxieties and the griefs of modern men and women*" (Gaudium et Spes) all over the world. It means being engaged and involved in an imperfect world trying to reach common fulfillment for all humanity.

**For as Christians, we are all called, gathered, disciplined (instructed) by God, and sent to "all the world [to] tell the Good News."**

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