Getty images/Rawpixel

August 21, 2022

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Written by
THE FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

Is 66:18-21 | Heb 12:5-7, 11-13 | Lk 13:22-30

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

We all have things that come easily to us and things that seem hard. I can bake a delicious pie, but I cannot flip a fried egg. I can resurrect your dead iPhone, but I can't keep a houseplant alive. The list goes on for each of us. Fortunately, neither our natural talents nor foibles will get us into or keep us out of heaven. "Strive to enter through the narrow gate," Jesus tells us. When I first read that passage, I said to myself, "What's the narrow gate?" But I think the key word here might be *strive,* a verb meaning "to devote serious effort or energy." Getting to heaven, then, requires more than knowing who Jesus is or even going to Mass each week. It takes energy, effort, and persistence. It means establishing a relationship with Jesus – through prayer and following his commandment to love one another – such that he will "know where [we] are from" when we knock on the door. In doing so, we can hope to be among the people who recline at the table of the Lord in the kingdom of God.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

When Jesus was asked how many people will be saved and spoke of the narrow gate, he went on to say, "Many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough." Where do we find the strength we will need to pass through this gate that will lead to eternal life? By following Christ with all our being and not taking the easier, mainstream path when it conflicts with our Christian values. By recognizing that our salvation is a gift from our Savior, who willingly took on our human form and died for us. By understanding that Christ's sacrifice on the cross requires a response from us. God invites; we must respond. *Jesus* is our strength, and he is the only way to get through that narrow gate. Let us *strive* to do so, and in turn help the others whom God has put in our lives, accompanying them on this journey.

PRAY Make a list of the people in your life who have helped you grow closer to Jesus. Say a prayer of thanksgiving for each of them.