

Homily. 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.C. 24/25 August 2019.

Those of you who know your songs will get this; There's only a stairway to heaven but there's a highway to hell which tells us the direction most of us are headed. Now, of course, it's a joke and not to be taken too literally, but it does ring true with what Jesus teaches when He says that it's best to enter God's salvation by the narrow door for many are trying to enter but won't succeed because, by implication, they're trying to get in from the highway.

To help clarify the point He's is making Jesus adds that many who miss out will protest saying that they knew Him, dined with Him and heard His teaching. Yet, this isn't enough in and of itself. As Jesus says, it can't open that narrow door to life or lead us on the stairway to Heaven.

Believing in Jesus, listening to His words and sharing table with Him as we do is good but can't end there. It still lacks an essential component. If we want the way into life and salvation something more is asked of us. This 'more' is our deeds that make the words of Jesus come alive today, our actions that take the table fellowship out of these doors and into the big, wide world and our faith in Jesus becoming our way of daily living.

It's this point that Jesus is making when He tells us that people from all corners of the world, east, west, north and south, will come to take our place at the Kingdom feast while some of us will find ourselves left out in the cold darkness. It's the doers, the people who take action, who will find their way in by that harder, narrow door, that steeper stairway. Meanwhile, those who can talk the talk but can't walk the walk by taking the easy highway will miss the entry altogether. Let's heed what Jesus says, not getting too sure of ourselves, unless we take what we believe and do here and live it out in our relationships at home, at work and in our schools.

Striving hard to welcome, understand and care for strangers and those who differ from us because of their colour, race, beliefs and cultures is a great way to start practicing what we teach. Doing this will lead us the narrow doorway, the stairway to Heaven, which opens up us to life with Jesus and the feast of nations. There we'll be surprised to discover that many who were thought to be the least and last will be first seated at the table while some who thought that they were first in the fast lane to the door will learn that they are last and least of all.