

HOMILY FOR 21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR OF LUKE

1. Interesting question Jesus is asked: are they few who will be saved
 - a. What are the odds of getting into heaven; is it worth listening and following you
 - b. Is it like a lottery, is the prize worth the cost
 - c. Or is heaven like an exclusive club
 - i. Groucho Marx quote: I refuse to belong to any club that would have me as a member
 - d. Questioner is trying to figure out the odds of salvation and weighing that against cost
2. Jesus answer suggests that this is not the right question
 - a. Both Jesus and Isaiah say that God does not want to limit salvation
 - b. People from east and west, north and south will come streaming to the kingdom
 - c. They will be welcomed to sit at God's table and rejoice in His feast
3. Even though God wants all these people to be saved, Jesus warns against presumption
 - a. The gate is a narrow gate
 - b. Many will be locked out and say Lord, open the door for us; we ate and drank with you, you taught in our streets
 - c. Jesus says He will answer: I do not know where you are from; go away you evildoers
 - d. Jesus is warning us against being too confident in our goodness
 - e. Moment we begin to compare ourselves with other taking pride in ourselves, looking down on other, we are in trouble
 - f. Those we might think have no right to get into heaven might well be the first in the door while we wait outside
4. Heaven is not a place like an exclusive club we can try to get into
 - a. It is a relationship with God; God sees us as His children
 - b. Jesus is the first child, He is that narrow gate through which we can meet God
 - c. As Hebrews tells us to enter the narrow gate,
 - d. We must realize, we are children in need of discipline
 - i. Discipline – first thought is punishment, actually wider view
 - e. Discipline is rather a course of training in order to develop skills
 - i. Discipline is not simply learning some facts but actually making knowledge and experience a part of who we are
 - f. Children receive the discipline of education to learn not just facts
 - i. Learn skills of reading, thinking, solving problems, learning to communicate knowledge
 - g. Education and formation is hard work, as author of Hebrews says it is painful
 - h. Whether one is trying to learn to play a musical instrument or speak in public, practice is painful and frustrating, not a cause for joy
 - i. If we remain faithful to the discipline of practice, it becomes worth it

5. Hebrews tells us God is training us to be His children and there are some skills we have to keep practicing at
 - a. Being His child means loving Him with whole heart, mind, soul and strength
 - i. Not easy to put God first in everything, to be always grateful to God
 - ii. Instead of enjoying and celebrating the wonders of God's gift of creation
 1. our fears and desires tempt us towards controlling it for ourselves
 - iii. security and pleasure become more important than God
 - iv. Need discipline and practice to say no to our desires and put God first
 - b. Loving God also means loving our neighbor
 - i. We can practice at looking at our jobs or professions as ways to serve God's people
 - ii. The real purpose of work should be to serve God and his people
 - iii. We deserve fair wage for our work but the primary purpose should be doing God's will for His people
6. because of Original Sin we struggle with temptation of not wanting to be God's children
 - a. God has given us Jesus first as an example of total obedience and surrender to God
 - b. But Jesus is more than that
 - c. Through the Church, through the sacraments He becomes part of us
 - d. He strengthens and encourages us to overcome the temptations of being independent and having the illusion that we could control our lives
 - e. Letting go of our desires and illusion and letting Jesus act through and in us does not just happen
 - f. The urge to be in control, to get what I want when I want it, will always be present
 - g. the struggles and pains of life, united in faith in Christ gives us discipline needed to become a truly loving person, a child of God