

Who Will Sit at the Table

Twenty-first Sunday of Ordinary Time – August 21, 2106- Luke 13:22-30

Many years ago, I had a conversation with Fr. James Duster, former pastor at St. John and St. Isidore, about the Kingdom of God and who might or might not be seated at the final banquet table. As per Fr. Duster's usual cynical response, he smiled at me and said, "I think a lot of people will be surprised as to who makes it." In other words, our judgement as to who is worthy is not the judgement that counts. The judgement that counts belongs to God.

In today's gospel, the evangelist, Luke, is attempting to provide for his readers (and us) an understanding of God's infinite mercy and our finite ability to accept God's mercy, love and forgiveness. We are a rather judgmental species. We tend to live in the illusion that God's judgment is our judgement. We cast an evaluative assessment on other people's lives in an attempt to give meaning and substance to our own. Jesus says that what gives our life meaning and substance is our relationship with him along with our commitment to follow him.

Jesus is pretty clear this week. He does not indicate who will be saved, but rather, challenges all of us to **"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."** The narrow gate is a shredding of the things in this life that get in our way of our relationship with Christ.

If we can see that the things which we have in this life such as our house, car, job or family do not truly belong to us but to God, then we are more in line with the challenge that this week's gospel is calling us.

Fr. Duster was attempting to say to me that those who seem to have the least in life will probably enter and sit at table long before those who are busy and burdened by the things of this life. I remember not really understanding him at the time, but age and reflection has made me far more open to the truth that my life does not belong to me, but to God. Therefore, my entrance into the final banquet table does not belong to me either, but rather, to God.

It is my responsibility to choose wisely the things of this life that reflect my choice to follow Jesus. I'm finding that the gate is getting much narrower the older I become. I have some shredding to do before I sit at table.

Blessings!
Sue Schettler