

St. Louis Day, Castroville

August 25, 2019

It is never easy to be a true disciple of the risen Lord Jesus. It involves considerable cost, risk, and courage. In today's gospel the man who asks Jesus whether many will be saved is curious about others. Jesus re-directs the question to concern the man himself. Not everyone who seeks will enter God's kingdom, Jesus says. Then he adds that his disciples – including us – should “try to come in through the narrow door.”

In other words, despite the fact that God loves us fully and eternally, this, of itself, does not guarantee each of us a place in his kingdom. Rather, we must live in accord with the vision and values of the gospel. We must put our beliefs into practice – each day! We must carry out God's will and observe his law. God does not force his love on us. He expects us freely to receive his love into our lives and to respond lovingly. We are to rid ourselves of sin and selfishness. We are to learn how to love God and one another.

Jesus observes that some people live under the sad illusion that they are following him, but maintain only a casual relationship with him. Some eat and drink at table with him but do not establish

an intimate relationship with him. Some hear his teaching but do not accept it as God's own word that is to be put into practice. Many want to have a special place at the messianic banquet in heaven. But some, many perhaps, will be sorely disappointed to discover that those they considered outcasts or outsiders – the poor, the neglected, the abused, the displaced, the undocumented – will have a place at God's table while they themselves will be turned away.

The first reading describes God's will that everyone come together in unity and community, witnessing to the truth of the gospel. God can make this happen. God can overcome the chaos of our world with order. God can heal our divisions and polarization with reconciliation. But God needs us to help him do this. The Letter to the Hebrews refers to the present time – think, for example, of the sexual abuse cases in the Church – as a time of purification. We are not to give up hope or become weak, but to allow God's Holy Spirit to empower us to live truly as missionary disciples of the risen Lord.

Jesus invites us to walk with him to Jerusalem, confident in God's love for us. Our Lady of Guadalupe will accompany us and reassure us with her maternal love. *Ven, Holy Spirit, ven!*