

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

From east and west they will come to take their place in the kingdom of God.

Through towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, 'Sir, will there be only a few saved?' He said to them, 'Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed.

'Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, "Lord, open to us" but he will answer, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will find yourself saying, "We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets," but he will reply, "I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!"

'Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And men from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

'Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

21 AUGUST 2022

WORTH THE STRUGGLE

While the people of Israel were rightly thankful for being chosen by God, they often reflected on their relationship with the nations that surrounded them. The experience of the exile would change them forever since Jews could then be found throughout the ancient world. What was their role among the nations? Would the nations come to worship the living God? One response is represented for us in the last chapter of the book of Isaiah who saw that the role of the survivors of the exile was to be a light to the nations. Their faithful witness would result in conversion and worship in Jerusalem.

When Jesus was asked, 'will there be only a few saved?', his reply adds a new dimension to the equation. The nations will come and take part in the banquet of the Messiah, but some of those who felt they had reserved places will be forced to look on from outside! The determining factor is how people respond to the salvation and life which Jesus offers. Simply being part of the people of Israel is not enough; later Jesus weeps over Jerusalem because 'you did not know the time of your visitation' (Luke 19:44).

Today's passage from the letter to the Hebrews sets out to help Christians who were discouraged by the opposition and suffering they were experiencing. Rather than suffering being a sign of God's rejection, they are encouraged to see it as how they are being prepared to take their places at the messianic banquet.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Isa 66:18-21

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

They will gather all of your people from all nations.

The Lord says this: I am coming to gather the nations of every language. They shall come to witness my glory. I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, Put, Lud, Moshech, Rosh, Tubal, and Javan, to the distant islands that have never heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory to the nations. As an offering to the Lord they will bring all your brothers, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on dromedaries, from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, says the Lord, like Israelites bringing oblations in clean vessels to the Temple of the Lord. And of some of them I will make priests and Levites, says the Lord.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 116. R. Mk 16:15

R. Go out to all the world; and tell the Good News (or Alleluia!)

1. O praise the Lord, all you nations, / acclaim him all you peoples! **R.**
2. Strong is his love for us; / he is faithful for ever. **R.**

SECOND READING

Heb 12:5-7, 11-13

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

The Lord disciplines those he loves.

Have you forgotten that encouraging text in which you are addressed as sons? My son, when the Lord corrects you, do not treat it lightly; but do not get discouraged when he reprimands you. For the Lord trains the ones that he loves and he punishes all those that he acknowledges as his sons. Suffering is part of your training; God is treating you as his sons. Has there ever been any son whose father did not train him?



Of course, any punishment is most painful at the time, and far from pleasant; but later, in those on whom it has been used, it bears fruit in peace and goodness. So hold up your limp arms and steady your trembling knees and smooth out the path you tread; then the injured limb will not be wrenched, it will grow strong again.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 14:6

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord;

no one comes to the Father, except through me.

Alleluia!

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