

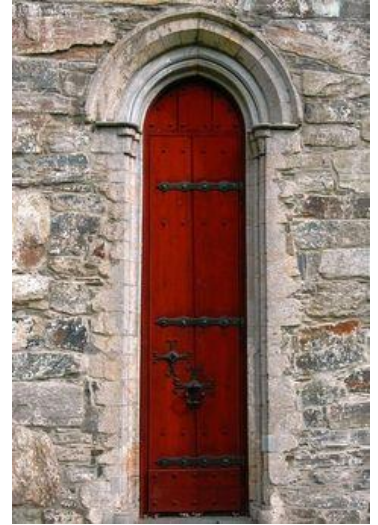


ALL SAINTS'

CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY August 21 & BEYOND

If the references to God's coming in judgment in Sunday's passages from Isaiah and the letter to the Hebrews have us squirming, the gospel lesson doesn't let us off the hook. Whether we allow ourselves to dwell on it or not, when the man asks, "Will only a few be saved," he's expressing the deepest concern of our hearts as well. For Jesus to respond "**Strive to enter by the narrow door,**" because not everyone who thinks they ought to be saved will be can (and should!) leave us at least a little unsettled, wondering what went wrong for them.



Their problem was that they didn't have what the Bible calls "fear of the Lord." This doesn't mean being terrorized by what one of my seminary professors called, "the Gonna-getcha God," that is, the imperious judge waiting to pour out his wrath on our every misstep. We might think of it instead as realizing that we were made for an exclusive relationship with someone we can't control or define and that when we try to find fulfillment outside of that relationship we do ourselves an eternally grave injustice. The fear of the Lord is "the beginning of wisdom" (Ps 111:10; Sir 1:14) because it puts everything in our lives in order. Wisdom ends in love because as we're motivated to pursue this relationship instead of settling for something that seems easier, we come to know and experience that God is Love (cf. 1 John 4).

Isaiah lays out the pattern for what happens without the fear of the Lord at the beginning of today's passage. He's basically saying, "You've made a deal with the devil to protect you from suffering and judgment, but that contract is a lie and your shelter's too flimsy." Our flimsy shelters are things like comfort, security, success, or being liked, which don't even stand up to the sufferings of this world. In his mercy God allows suffering to touch and even sweep away those things, showing us that they can't deliver what they promised.

The lies that we don't need to be that concerned about what happens when we die right now or that we just need to live a good life are even more dangerous. They take the edge off our anxiety now, and the longer we listen to them, the number we get to God poking and prodding our hearts. So Jesus says, "Strive to enter by the narrow door," urgently

warning us not to settle for anything less than God himself and to set the highest standards for loving him. And even though learning to properly fear the Lord will be difficult, we can do it with boldness and confidence, not squirming or shrinking back, because, as St. Paul points out, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31)

Father McQueen

Readings for this Sunday

Isaiah 28:14-22 Psalm 46 Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-29 Luke 13:22-30

Calendar

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
 9:30a Christian Formation (Fireside Room)
 10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)
 —*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors’ Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary’s Chapel)
 9:30a MASS (St. Mary’s Chapel)
AA Meetings 6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)
 8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)
 8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)