

Dear Friends,

A man asks Jesus, **"Lord, will only a few people be saved?"** Will only a few people get to heaven or will almost everyone make it? Many favor an optimistic answer from today's gospel. Jesus speaks about people coming "from east and west, north and south" to "recline at the table in the kingdom of God." People hear verses like that and conclude that it is rather easy to get into heaven, and that a person would have to sin "big time" in order to end up in hell. That is a comforting view.

Jesus, however, also says something else in today's Gospel. He says, **"Strive to enter by the narrow gate."** He speaks about people who thought they had made it into heaven, but they were locked out. Jesus wants you and me to consider the possibility that we might not be saved. Cardinal Hans Urs von Balthasar – a great theologian - said: **"It is indispensable that every individual Christian be confronted, in the greatest seriousness, with the possibility of his/her becoming lost."** It is something to take very seriously, and I encourage you to reflect upon it during this week.

The best time to reflect is when we take time away from our normal activities to spend with God, to examine the priorities of life. Retreats can be a powerful step toward personal conversion. Before Our Lord began His public ministry, He spent 40 days in the desert praying and fasting as a way to prepare for the important work ahead (see Lk 4:1-13). Those were days of retreat.

During His three years of public ministry, Jesus would sometimes invite His disciples to **"come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while"** (Mk 6:31).



I would strongly recommend it for everyone who can to make a weekend retreat. When we go away for a weekend retreat, we are going away to be with God and to deepen our friendship with Him. Too often, in daily life, we are overwhelmed with so many distractions that we cannot hear the voice of God. When we go on retreat, we give all our attention to God. It is good to turn off our cell phone and unplug ourselves from the internet. God wants our attention. Everyone and everything else can wait. Retreat renews us. Men of the Sacred Heart, do not miss the great opportunity to take part in ACTS Retreat, September 22-25! Everyone at some point needs to leave daily activity behind, to spend time with God and fellow parishioners.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis