

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Oct 30th 2013

The readings for today balance challenge, assurance, and mercy. Jesus tells us to go through the narrow gate. Our call to love and to bring healing and justice requires sacrifice. Making selfless choices is tough. Sometimes even figuring out what a selfless and loving choice would be in a situation puts us in a bind. We get confused. We fall to temptation. We choose anger, frustration, resentment, or selfishness.

Thankfully, as the other readings remind us, we have hope and an advocate. We have the hope that comes from knowing that we serve a merciful God. God's mercy gives us confidence to take the step we think is the right step, knowing that mercy abounds to bring us back on track if we misstep.

We are not slogging through a narrow gate on our own. We are not aiming for the narrow gate to claim a short-term win for self-discipline or glory. When we journey with Jesus through the narrow gate, we work with him to open the world around us to its kingdom potential. He also provides an advocate to pray with us and for us. Think about one of the best prayer people you know. Now take a few moments to relish in the thought that our relationship with Jesus brings powerful prayer on our behalf, constantly. What a thought! Now recognize that if you are in a Christian community, you also have other fellow humans who also have this supernatural prayer assistance, and one of those individuals may very well be praying for you right now. We don't have to have answers or even know the right questions to pray. God knows we are often confused and don't know what to pray for ourselves and for others. Can we make time and space for the Spirit groaning within us to pray on our behalf and on the behalf of others? Can we take a few moments to listen after that prayer for wisdom and encouragement to take the next steps through the narrow gate? Can we praise God for his hope and mercy and for the joy of fellow travelers in our communities?

Sue Crawford