

Lk 13:22-30; Isa 66:18-21; Heb 12:5-7, 11-13 Communion with Christ

There is a town of 30,000 in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Siroki-Brijeg) where there has never been a divorce. What is their secret?

For centuries they have suffered invasions by Muslims, Nazi occupation and genocide, and control by Communist atheists. But in their suffering, they learned an epic lesson: our salvation is a communion with Jesus on that cross.

They turned it into a wedding ritual: The bride and groom bring a crucifix. The priest blesses it and says: *You have found your cross. and it is a cross to be loved, to be carried, a cross not to be thrown away, but to be cherished.*

When it comes time to exchange vows, the bride places her right hand on the crucifix, the groom placed his hand over hers and the priest wraps his stole around them.

After saying their vows, the bride and groom kiss Jesus on the cross, and only after that do they kiss each other.

The crucifix becomes the center piece of their spiritual life. They lay their hopes and dreams, struggles and sacrifices, at the foot of the cross. And when their children go to bed, they kiss Jesus just like their parents did on the day they were married.

That is the narrow gate of Jesus Christ...and our communion with Jesus on that cross.

Don't take salvation for granted. Jesus said: *Strive to enter through the narrow gate* (Lk 13:24)—the gate that leads to salvation, but don't wait for the last minute to do it.

Many believe in a deception that everyone will get into heaven, except maybe really bad people like cold-blooded serial killers.

Or maybe we can live free, and do whatever we want, and later on, we can have a death-bed conversion.

But that's a lie. Jesus said the greatest commandment is:

We must love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our being, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbor as ourself (Lk 10:27).

And, we must "strive," make every effort, to do that, not tomorrow--but NOW.

Be forewarned! We may find ourselves standing outside, on the day of judgment, knocking on the locked door, saying "Lord, open the door for us."

Some will say: "but we ate and drank [with you Jesus]," when we celebrated the Holy Eucharist. But that may not be enough.

Some will say: "we heard you teach us [Jesus]," when you proclaimed the Word of God. But that may not be enough, either.

Jesus will say: *I do not know where you are from.* In other words, Jesus does not know you because you never really got to "know" Jesus.

If we really want to "know" Jesus, we have to live in communion with Jesus...live in Jesus and let Jesus live in you. Like He said: *I am the vine, you are the branches* (Jn 15:5).

Wouldn't it be wonderful? If we could say: *I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me* (Gal 2:20). I've got news for you: Yes we can!

Because Jesus came to live in us when we were baptized. The Holy Spirit sealed us with an indelible spiritual mark (it can never be erased) that we belong to Jesus (CCC 1272).

Jesus comes to live in us every time we go to confession, and the priest says: "I absolve you from your sins."

Jesus comes to live in us when we celebrate the mass, and we offer up our sacrifices with His holy sacrifice on that cross, as our own, to God Our Father in heaven.

Jesus comes to live in us when we receive Holy Communion and He comes to live deep inside of us,

...His heart becomes our heart, His mind becomes our mind, and His soul becomes our soul...and we are filled completely with His Holy Spirit!

And Jesus comes to live in us when we hear His word, we imitate Him, and we become what we imitate (Rom 8:29).

So let us follow! Follow Him from cradle to the cross, His love for the poor, His mercy for sinners, His healing the sick,

...His driving out demons, His love for God and His love for us, and His complete obedience to the will of God.

What an example He gave us at the Last Supper when he got down on His knees like a servant and washed the disciples' feet (Jn 13:4-5).

What an example He gave us in the garden when His sweat became like drops of blood: *Father if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but your will be done* (Lk 22:42).

Like Jesus said, *I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do* (Jn 13:15).

That is our mission. Live in communion with Jesus. Live in Jesus and let Jesus live in you.

But not only that. In the first reading God says: *I will set a sign among them* (that is Jesus);...

*...from them I will send fugitives to the nations* (that is the apostles persecuted) *...and they will proclaim my glory among the nations* (Isa 66:19).

Guess what? That is us. We are called to glorify God by bringing others into communion with Jesus!

So we must go...to those on the wide road of destruction and bring them back onto the narrow road of salvation.

How? People have to be told: that life matters and love matters and that their choices matter.

People have got to be told: that God loves us, and we must receive His love and then share that love with others.

People have got to be told: that Jesus is the light that came into this world of darkness and now we must leave behind the darkness and walk together with Jesus as children of the light.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus give us the power of the Holy Spirit and all the grace we need to live in communion with You: You in us, and us in You.

And may we go...to those on the wide road of destruction and bring them back onto the narrow road of salvation—which is You, Jesus Christ, now and forever amen!