

**1. Read** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.  
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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] Deuteronomy 30:19-20

[2] Luke 1:54-55

[3] Luke 1:68-71

[4] The Order of the Mass (Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite; Words of Consecration and Elevation)

[5] The Order of the Mass (Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite; The Liturgy of the Eucharist)

[6] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D., *Divine Intimacy*

[7] 1 Peter 3:11-12

[8] *Oratory: Place of Prayer*; Rule of Saint Benedict

[9] Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Faith and the Future*

# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? Luke 13:22-30** — Pg. 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## **Gospel Reading – Luke 13:22-30– Roman Missal**

Jesus passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, “Lord, will only a few people be saved?” He answered them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’ He will say to you in reply, ‘I do not know where you are from. And you will say, ‘We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.’ Then he will say to you, ‘I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!’ And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

## **Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Ordinary**

**Time** *From the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world of the Second Vatican Council*

*(Gaudium et spes. n. 39) The foreshadowing of the new age*

We do not know the time when earth and humanity will reach their completion, nor do we know the way in which the universe will be transformed. The world as we see it, disfigured by sin, is passing away. But we are sure that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth. In this new earth righteousness is to make its home, and happiness will satisfy, and more than satisfy, all the yearnings for peace that arise in human hearts. On that day, when death is conquered, the sons of God will be raised up in Christ; what was sown as something weak and perishable will be clothed in incorruption. Love and the fruits of love will remain, and the whole of creation, made by God for man, will be set free from the frustration that enslaves it. We are warned indeed that a man gains nothing if he wins the whole world at the cost of himself. Yet our hope in a new earth should not weaken, but rather stimulate our concern for developing this earth, for on it there is growing up the body of a new human family, a body even now able to provide some foreshadowing of the new age. Hence, though earthly progress is to be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ’s kingdom, yet in so far as it can help toward the better ordering of human society it is of great importance to the kingdom of God. The blessings of human dignity, brotherly communion and freedom—all the good fruits on earth of man’s co-operation with nature in the Spirit of the Lord and according

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to his command—will be found again in the world to come, but purified of all stain, resplendent and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the Father an eternal and everlasting kingdom: “a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.” On this earth the kingdom is already present in sign; when the Lord comes it will reach its completion.

### **The Roads to Heaven and Hell – Lesson and Discussion**

*“Depart from me, all you evildoers!”*

From the beginning God has given free will. He did not force the angels to choose Him. In the same manner, God did not and will not force man to choose Him. To be forced to choose, is not a choice. Our choice however does have effect in our life and in the life of others. God gives us free will and presents to us the choices. “I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the Lord swore he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”[1]

Jesus is the promise that God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For this reason Mary proclaims in her Magnificat, “...He has come to the help of His servant Israel, for He has remembered His promise of mercy, the promise He made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.”[2] The Church prays this prayer every evening in Liturgy of the Hours. In praise of this promise, Zechariah proclaims, “Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel; He has come to His people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of His servant David. Through His holy prophets he promised of old that He would save us from our enemies...”[3] This prayer is prayed by the Church each morning in Liturgy of the Hours. In the praying of these two canticles, the Church forever remembers and praises Jesus Christ, the promise of the Father. This promise is offered to all but not all will accept it just as Christ died for all, and gained salvation for all, but not all will accept what has been gained for them. The merits of Christ on the Cross can be compared to a person creating a bank account for every person in the world. Each person has his or her own account with enough money to live. This account has been set up and the money has been deposited, all the person has to do is withdraw from our account. Christ has deposited the merit, the means of salvation. He has deposited this merit, this grace, and the means of salvation in the Church (the bank). All that is needed is that we make a withdrawal. Not only should we make the withdraw but we are called to do good with the merits that He has given us. At Mass we hear the words, “For this is the chalice of My Blood, of the new and eternal testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins.”[4] There will be some that will reject Christ and not have the remission of their sins. Christ died for all, but not all will accept. Many however will accept Christ and will have the remission of theirs sins. Let us be counted in that “many”. It is through the Church that the “many” are gathered together. The Church is the Body of Christ and thus its members not

only live for Christ, but actually live “through Him, and with Him, and in Him”[5] as is prayed in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The unity of the Body of Christ is a sign of the victory over death and sin. “Just as division among men is a sign of sin, so their unification is a sign of God’s saving power and of his love for all.”[6] It is the duty of the Christian then to be a witness to Christ and to use his free will for good, for God. We must always pursue good and avoid evil. Saint Peter tells us, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and sojourners to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against the soul. Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that if they speak of you as evildoers, they may observe your good works and glorify God on the day of visitation.”[7]

**Why is the good path narrow and the evil path wide?** First we have free will. We must use our free will to choose good or evil, no one will choose for us. It is hard to choose. Second we struggle against the devil, the world, and the flesh and must fight these through a life of grace. We are offered grace in so many ways (both ordinary and extraordinary means), but this does not mean that we will embrace the grace we are offered. “We must depend not on ourselves but on God only; ‘I can do all things in him who strengthened me’ (Philippians 4:13)”[8] Third it is easy to follow the crowd, the way that everyone is going. Finally, in choosing God there may often be hardship and persecution for our choice. It is for this reason that Pope Benedict XVI said that the Church will become small. “The church will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes . . . she will lose many of her social privileges . . . As a small society, [the Church] will make much bigger demands on the initiative of her individual members....It will be hard-going for the Church, for the process of crystallization and clarification will cost her much valuable energy. It will make her poor and cause her to become the Church of the meek . . . The process will be long and wearisome as was the road from the false progressivism on the eve of the French Revolution — when a bishop might be thought smart if he made fun of dogmas and even insinuated that the existence of God was by no means certain . . . But when the trial of this sifting is past, a great power will flow from a more spiritualized and simplified Church. Men in a totally planned world will find themselves unspeakably lonely. If they have completely lost sight of God, they will feel the whole horror of their poverty. Then they will discover the little flock of believers as something wholly new. They will discover it as a hope that is meant for them, an answer for which they have always been searching in secret. And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith. She may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but she will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man’s home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.”[9]