

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Year C. August 28, 2013

Theme: Stopped at the Door

Two years ago my friend, Fr. Matt, and I decided to take our annual pre-Lent get-away to South Beach in Miami, Florida.

Little did we know when we made our reservations that South Beach is really for the young, the beautiful, the skinny and the very rich - which clearly left the two of us out.

We did, however, enjoy watching the late night ritual as these beautiful people tried to get into the posh South Beach night clubs.

At one or two in the morning they would line up behind red velvet ropes, dressed in over the top outfits, hats and make-up, some elegant, some just clownish.

All of them hoped to be invited into the club where the "in crowd", the really "chic of the chic," would dance and drink and snort heaven knows what "ecstasy" until well past dawn.

All depended on the bouncer who stood by the single entrance door to the club:

If he looked your way, beckoned his finger and opened the door just enough for you to pass through, you were in.

Otherwise you could count on spending your night in south beach doing what Father Matt and I did: watching through the windows as the young, beautiful, skinny, rich people partied away the night.

Now Jesus certainly did not have South Beach in mind when he told us to **“strive enter through the narrow gate” and “that many would try to enter and be unable to do so.”**

But surely he was reminding us access to the Kingdom of God requires considerable effort and determination, commitment and energy.

If we want to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus warned us the door is narrow and not easily passed through.

Actually in our time we are used some massive doors giving way quite easily to our touch:

---literal garage doors are routinely opened daily with the push of a button.

---the door of worldwide communications is opened when we punch in a handful of number on our cell phones.

---huge doors of data bases, libraries, books, museums, virtually all human knowledge is opened on our laps when we access the Internet via our notebooks.

So with all these wide doors open to us, is Jesus cautioning not to think of the Realm of God in the same way?

There is no holy password gives access to God's truth.

No card swipe automatically opens the pearly gates to God's Presence.

No barcode indicates who gets in and who watches from outside looking in.

A narrow gate, hard to find and rough to push open is the only access we have to the mind of God as we search for the moral truths we need in our contemporary world and society.

Many will search but few will find this narrow gate of truth; they will give up in frustration and disgust.

Many as Jesus told us in past weeks will be distracted by the lure of greed and material wealth, by the activities of daily living.

But for the few who persist, who search for and enter that narrow gate, there are the riches and wonders of the Kingdom of God.

The never ending presence of God.

The full potential of one's human mind and body.

A reserved seat at the banquet table of eternity.

Even the chicy-chicy, beautiful, rich, skinny people of South Beach can't claim that!