

“Go out to the whole world proclaim the Good News”

I remember a visiting priest saying that if he were stuck for a theme on which to preach he would always look to the response to the psalm and in doing so he would then find his foundation on which to build his homily. It's good advice as the response of today's mass clearly demonstrates.

The Gospel has a rather foreboding undertone to it which makes us quiver a bit at the sentiment which it conveys. The question “*will only a few be saved?*” stops us in our tracks somewhat and directs our thoughts to whether we're on the right track, and that come the day of judgement, will the door be slammed in my face or what? The scariest thing as far as I am concerned is that little sentence “*we once ate and drank in your company*”. I find it disconcerting because of what it alludes to. We come each week to celebrate the liturgy and when we come we quite literally “eat and drink in your company” and despite this we may still be greeted with those words “*I do not know where you come from. Away from me all you wicked men!*” This is where I think the words of the response to the psalm make their impact and come to our rescue.

Unless what we do in Church galvanises us into action in the world then we are wasting our time. We can create the most beautiful of liturgies in which the singing rings out to the rafters and our praise and worship of God are second to none, but if we ignore the purpose of what we are doing and forget that saying of Jesus *what I want is mercy not sacrifice*, then it shouldn't come as a surprise to be told that we have misunderstood the whole point of what our faith means. The Eucharistic giving and receiving is about an exchange taking place between God on the one part, and you and me on the other. This exchange is not one in which what we receive is meant to be pocketed away never to see the light of day again. What we have received is a commission to *go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News* and the Good News is what we carry within us. If that Good News is made manifest in our daily lives, in the things we do and say, in the way in which we relate to each other then there will be no fear that the Lord will not recognise where we come from because our actions and our deeds will show that we emanate from the table of the Lord. We have taken his food and his drink; his body and his blood into our own flesh and we have lived out that command to love and to do this unto *the least of these brothers of mine*.

It is a challenge to each of us because it asks us to turn our world on its head. The least well off, the poor, the marginalized, these are the ones to whom the kingdom belongs and to whom the door will be opened. It is only when we have our eyes opened to understand this that we come to terms with the radical nature of our call. We gather round a table to eat and drink with the Lord in order that what we receive his *diakonia* and thus ourselves be conformed to his nature as the servant who knows his masters bidding. Let us open the door so that we can go out to the whole world and be welcomed in.