

mean that we will not be able to enter the New Jerusalem? The answer is “it depends.” We are all sinners, but those whose sin is forgiven by the blood of Christ are named in the Lamb’s book of life. “Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered” (**Psalm 32:1**). Those who are in Christ are the children of God (**John 1:12**) and will receive an eternal inheritance (**Peter 1:4**). Jesus said “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved” (**John 10:9**). Jesus is heaven’s only gate.

-Bernard Kellett

Entrance antiphon: I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord. Should they cry to me in any distress, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord forever.

First Reading: Isaiah 55: 6-9

Responsorial Psalm: 144: Response: The Lord is close to all who call him.

Second Reading: Philippians 1: 20-24,27

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens! Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew: 20:1-16

Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept; may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.



When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God. [Leviticus 23:22](#)



Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A, 2023 Weekly Reflection:

The Pearly Gates: The idea of there being “pearly gates” in heaven is based on a reference in the book of Revelation describing the twelve gates of New Jerusalem. The passage describes an immense and lovely city with a wall built of jasper (a kind of precious stone that can be red, yellow, brown, or green) and twelve foundations of different gemstones. Then it describes the gates themselves: “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass” (**Revelation 21:21**). Each gate has the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel etched into it: Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Gad, Issachar, Joseph, Judah, Levi, Naphtali, Simeon, and Zebulun. The twelve tribes of Israel were named after sons of Jacob.

The “pearly gates” are often considered as the entrance into heaven, but Revelation shows the gates as belonging to the city of New Jerusalem. The city and heaven are not exactly synonymous; the city comes “down out of heaven” (**Revelation 21:2**) and is part of the new earth (**Revelation 21:1**). Also, contrary to the popular idea that the pearly gates bar heaven’s entrance, the Bible says the gates of pearl will always be open: they “will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there” (**Revelation 21:22–25**). The gates, made of a single pearl, will be entered by the redeemed in the eternal state: “Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (**Revelation 21:26–27**).

The promise of entry to the New Jerusalem is both beautiful and daunting. The idea of such a city is wonderful to think about—a place where nothing false or unclean or harmful will ever be able to enter. And the pearly gates will be a dazzling sight. However, we have all done wrong at times. Does this