

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



“Lord, will only a few people be saved?” this question, asked of Jesus in the Gospel today, is probably not on our minds. We have many other questions, but not this one.

Who will be saved? This question is only asked by those who are aware that they need saving. But saving from what?

My sister and brother-in-law were here visiting in July. We went to the beach one day, and swam in the designated area, under the watchful eye of the lifeguards, sat high up on their chairs. Once in a while a whistle would sound, and the whole beach would stop, as one of the life guards stood up and begin signaling to someone in the deep to get back in. Everyone on the beach looked out to the person in the waves, to see if they swam back in to shore. We all knew that if they did not hear the whistle, or ignored it, or were unable to resist the current, the lifeguard has to go out and get them.

The swimmer may have been unaware that they were in danger, but there was someone else whose job it was to keep an eye on them. If the alarm was not heeded, the lifeguard would have to risk his own life, and jump in to save them.

We are all on the beach, we are all in the water. There is a lifeguard on duty. His name is Jesus Christ. The one who thinks they don't need the lifeguard swims at their own peril.

We call Jesus Our Lord and Savior.

But he is the Savior of what?

From what does he save us?

From what does he save you?

Such questions are disarmed, relegated to the banal, by what has been called the Empty Hell Theory. It goes something like this: God is good, He is Love, so He could not create a hell, and certainly would not send anyone there. Conclusion, hell does not exist, so there is nothing to worry about, there is no need for a Savior.

The beach is beautiful, the sea is fantastic, there is no current, we're all great swimmers, go ahead and enjoy yourself. Why do we need a life guard on the beach if no one is drowning?

Jesus does not answer the question posed to him “who will be saved?”, but rather speaks of striving to enter through a gate, a door. There is a door which is open, which will one day be locked. Once it is locked there is nothing to be done, no amount of pleading, knocking, calling will be able to open it. But this door is in front of us today. Can you see it, do you know how to enter it? There is a lifeguard on duty today. He has already jumped in to rescue all of us who need help, i.e., all of us on the beach. He is the door, the gate, the safe passage through the waves.