

[Jesus said to the crowd,]
“Strive to enter through
the narrow door, for many,
I tell you, will attempt
to enter but will not be
strong enough.”

LUKE 13:24

The Narrow Gate

FR. JOSEPH JUKNIALIS

Some people find love in their lives; others complain of loneliness. Some find peace, while others seem to be perpetually angry. Some live comfortably amid human diversity, yet others insist that the rest of the world be like them. There are those who are able to forgive and compromise and offer compassion and those who cannot. The difference seems to be the ability to forgo one's own desires for the sake of a greater good or the common good. Such may be the narrow gate through which some may not be strong enough to enter.

Phrases like *the kingdom of God* or *the kingdom of heaven* are not just references to places to which we go

but also ways of being or states of existence. They all refer to God's presence, to life with God. You've heard people say they were so happy that they felt it was like heaven on earth. It wasn't a place they went but an experience of being filled with joy and peace. It's pure gift. No one ever finds it by focusing on oneself. It is the narrow gate by which we find our way into such a life. It is the doorway of caring for others. ●

Reflect

What is the “narrow gate” before me now—the most difficult challenge as a follower of Jesus?

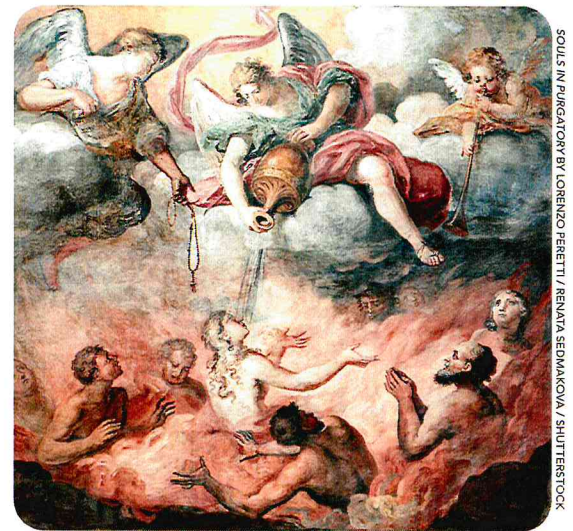
Dear Padre,

My wife mentioned that neither the Book of Mormon nor the Catholic Bible mentions purgatory. Please comment.

A not-uncommon frustration is when a person searches the Bible for a particular word or phrasing. Frankly, it is expecting too much from the religious text to be able to faithfully record a particular word or phrase that originated hundreds of years after the ancient text was composed. Purgatory is one such example of this frustration. The concept of purgatory is referenced in the biblical text, particularly in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and 7:1, Hebrews 9:27 and 12:14, and 2 Maccabees 12:46, but the word is never used.

This should come as no real surprise because it was not until the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) that the concept was expanded and formed into a theological statement of belief that has become central to Roman Catholicism. And what is that belief? The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is clear: “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned” (CCC, 1030, 1031a). The Book of Mormon never references purgatory, but it does speak about the afterlife and the experience of “waiting” in the spirit world for the completion of earthly time. ●

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org



SOULS IN PURGATORY BY LORENZO PERETTI / RENATA SEDMAKOWA / SHUTTERSTOCK



LOSSERVATORE ROMANO / CNA

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

The narrow door is an image that could scare us, as if salvation is destined for only a select few, or for perfect people. But...a little further ahead, [Jesus] confirms, “Men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God.”

Therefore, this door is narrow, but is open to everyone!

ANGELUS, ROME, AUGUST 21, 2022

Monday

August 25

Weekday

1 Thes 1:1–5, 8b–10

Mt 23:13–22

Tuesday

August 26

Weekday

1 Thes 2:1–8

Mt 23:23–26

Wednesday

August 27

St. Monica

1 Thes 2:9–13

Mt 23:27–32

Thursday

August 28

St. Augustine, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

1 Thes 3:7–13

Mt 24:42–51

Friday

August 29

The Passion of St. John the Baptist

1 Thes 4:1–8

Mk 6:17–29

Saturday

August 30

Weekday

1 Thes 4:9–11

Mt 25:14–30

Sunday

August 31

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sir 3:17–18, 20, 28–29

Heb 12:18–19, 22–24a

Lk 14:1, 7–14