

The Only Way

On February 7, 2022, in the show Journey Home on EWTN, a Hindu who belonged to the highest caste called Brahmin recounted how he became a Christian and eventually a Catholic priest. Indian society has an entrenched social structure and built-in social discrimination. Yet this highly educated and rich Brahmin was called by God to convert to Christianity. "I also died for you," he heard Jesus say to him one Good Friday afternoon many years ago. This led to a radical conversion.

When asked why there is a big resistance in India to convert to Christianity, he said Hindus believe there are many ways up the mountain and not only one as Jesus teaches. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6).

Yes, indeed, could not there be many ways to heaven? Could not there be many ways to reach the top of the mountain?

I remember when I was giving a talk many years ago, after saying that there is only one way, and that is through Jesus, a Hindu-looking man got up and left the hall abruptly. Now I know what that was all about. Hindus think there are many ways. Some of them even have a picture of Jesus in their altars.

But there is only one Father whom Jesus came to reveal to all mankind. There is only one set of truths and teachings which Jesus hears from the Father and teaches us. In John 12: 49-50, Jesus said, "For I have not spoken on my own; no, the Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to speak. Since I know that his commandment means eternal life, whatever I say is spoken just as he instructed me."

To accept the teachings of the Father as revealed by Jesus Christ would be very hard to be accepted by many people and cultures like in India or Japan.

In Japan the number of Catholics are dwindling; down to 440,000 from more than 500,000 20 years ago. When the Franciscan friars first came to Japan they were dressed in poor clothing which looked more like sack cloth. That was a cultural shock to the Japanese who favored colorful and rich clothing.

The poor are looked down upon in many cultures, including our own.

In Luke, chapter 6: 17-26, we hear Jesus say, "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied...." "But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who that are full now, for you shall hunger. Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."

These threatening words are found only in Luke's Gospel and not in the Beatitudes in Matthew. Luke is more vocal in denouncing injustices. There is discrimination of the poor and the marginalized in society who weep. Jesus wants us to continue to choose to be his disciples, to be rooted in Him, to be rooted in the truths that come only from the Father, who is our God, and the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Ishmael, of Jacob. Yes, there is only one way to the Father, and that is through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who had to come to the world to show us the Way and the Truth and the Life! Amen.