

Thursday's Gospel: Ask! Seek! Knock!

Gospel for Thursday in the 27th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 11:5-13*)

Jesus said to his disciples, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything’? I tell you, though he will

not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs.

And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Commentary

The Gospel for today's liturgy presents further teachings of Jesus after he taught his disciples how to pray the *Our Father*. The Master had just taught them to call God Father and now he does so again. God is a good father ready to give in abundance what his children ask for. Jesus repeats this truth over and over again throughout the Gospel, perhaps because it is so easy for us to have a confused image of God, and see him as a judge, as a legislator, as an accuser and not as someone who is on our side. Perhaps his deepest teaching on the true face and identity of God is the parable of the prodigal son, which Luke will present a few chapters later, where the Father's loving heart and the true way in which he looks at his children is highlighted.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus urges us not to let our trust as God's children to remain in mere words,

but to show it in our way of asking and praying. God the Father wants to see his children behaving as his sons and daughters, without fear of beseeching insistently the one who deeply loves us. Jesus encourages his listeners to realize the dignity of being God's children, and not to stand back and fail to experience all the goodness of God. Perhaps that's why he insists: ask!, seek!, knock!, because our Father God is eager to give us what we need, to open the door to us.

Through several examples, Jesus shows us how far removed the Father's affection is from petty calculation, from the logic of strict exchange and receiving in order to give. And he tells us that if we, being evil, know how to give good things to those who insistently ask us, how much more our Father God, who doesn't want simply to "give things" but to "give himself," generously

grant us his own Spirit, the Holy Spirit (v. 13).

Saint Josemaría was deeply aware that a Christian's prayer and petition must be marked by this awareness of being sons and daughters of God: "Rest in divine filiation. God is a Father – your Father! – filled with warmth and infinite love. Call him Father frequently and tell him, when you are alone, that you love him, that you love him very much, and that you feel proud and strong because you are his son" (*The Forge* 331).

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