

Thursday's Gospel: The Doorbell on God's Door

Gospel for Thursday in the 1st Week of Lent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 7:7-12*)

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples:

“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. Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will

give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.”

Commentary

Perhaps many of us share the same experience: we have prayed for a person, for an intention or a holy and good cause, but it doesn't turn out the way we wanted. Or it doesn't come about at all: that family member who continues to be far from God, the medical exam with a discouraging result, the legislation that fails to respect human dignity.

Our frustration, the feeling of helplessness, the doubt before the

apparent stillness of God increases when we hear the echo of those words of Jesus: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

So what should we do? Haven’t we all asked for many things that we haven’t received? Haven’t we all felt like we are knocking on God’s door, and the doorbell doesn’t seem to work?

This perplexity of ours is understandable, but that is why it is so important to go beyond our human perspective. In our prayer we have to acquire little by little, with the help of the Holy Spirit, God’s point of view. Thus we will come to realize that, paradoxically, when our Lord keeps us waiting, it is because he wants to prepare us to better receive his gifts.

Saint Augustine said: “Our God and Lord is not asking us to reveal our

desires to him, since He certainly cannot be unaware of them. Rather He wants, through our prayer, that our capacity to desire be increased, so that we become more able to receive the gifts He is preparing to give us. For his gifts are very great, and our capacity to receive is small and insignificant.”

Thus the persevering waiting in our prayer of petition helps the people or intentions we are praying for, but it also benefits us. God is our Father, and therefore He will give us much more than what we ask for.

But it is good to keep in mind Jesus' final words in this Gospel passage: “whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.” Our perseverance in prayer must go hand in hand with charity. If we behave like Christ with all people and in all situations, God the Father will look at

us with pride and fulfill all the desires in our heart.

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