

Sunday, 25th July, 2010

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you"

Reading 1: Gen, 18:20-32
Reading 2: Col, 2:12-14

Responsorial Psalm : Psa 138:1-3, 6-8
Gospel : Luke 11:1-13

Gospel Reading : Lk 11:1-13

He was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test." and he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,'

and he says in reply from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.'

I tell you, if he does not get up to give him the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

"And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish?

Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg?

If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

Meditation:

Do you pray with joy and confidence? The Jews were noted for their devotion to prayer. Formal prayer was prescribed for three set times a day. And the rabbis had a prayer for every occasion. It was also a custom for rabbis to teach their disciples a simple prayer they might use on a regular basis. Jesus' disciples ask him for such a prayer. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray he gave them the disciple's prayer, what we call the *Our Father* or *Lord's Prayer*. What does Jesus' prayer tell us about God and about ourselves? First, it tells us that God is both Father in being the Creator and Author of all that he has made, the first origin of everything and transcendent authority, and he is eternally Father by his relationship to his only Son who, reciprocally is Son only in relation to his Father (Matthew 11:27). In Christ we are reborn and become the adopted children of God (John 1:12-13; 3:3).

Jesus teaches us to address God as "our Father" and to confidently ask him for the things we need to live as his sons and daughters. We can approach God our Father with confidence and boldness because Jesus Christ has opened the way to heaven for us through his death and resurrection.

We can pray with expectant faith because our heavenly Father loves us and treats us as his children. He delights to give us what is good. His love and grace transforms us and makes us like himself. Through his grace and power we can love and serve one another as Jesus taught -- with grace, mercy, and loving-kindness. Do you treat others as they deserve, or do you treat them as the Lord would with grace and mercy? Jesus' prayer includes an injunction that we must ask God to forgive us in proportion as we forgive those who have wronged us. Are you ready to forgive as Jesus forgives?

What can we expect from God, especially when we recognize that he doesn't owe us anything and that we don't deserve his grace and favor? Jesus used the illustration of late-night guest to teach his listeners an important lesson about how God treats us in contrast to the kind of treatment we might expect from good neighbors. The rule of hospitality in biblical times required the cooperation of the entire community in entertaining an unexpected or late-night guest. Whether the guest was hungry or not, a meal would be served. In a small village it would be easy to know who had baked bread. Bread was essential for a meal because it served as a utensil for dipping and eating from the common dishes. Asking for bread from one's neighbor was both a common occurrence and an expected favor. To refuse to give bread would bring shame because it was a sign of inhospitality. If a neighbor can be imposed upon and coerced into giving bread in the middle of the night, how much more hospitable is God, who, no matter what the circumstances, is generous and gracious to give us what we need. In conclusion Jesus makes a startling claim: *How much more will the heavenly Father give!* He gives freely of his Holy Spirit that we may share in his life and joy. Do you approach your heavenly Father with confidence in his mercy and kindness?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

How often do you spend your time in prayer?

Is your prayer always of self or praising HIM?

How would you describe your relationship with the Father?

"Heavenly Father, you are merciful, gracious and kind. May I never doubt your love nor hesitate to seek you with confidence in order to obtain the gifts, graces, and daily provision I need to live as your disciple and child."