



1) Opening prayer

Father,
your love for us
surpasses all our hopes and desires.
Forgive our failings,
keep us in your peace
and lead us in the way of salvation.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Luke 11,5-13

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves, because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him;" and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it to him for friendship's sake, persistence will make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; everyone who searches finds; everyone who knocks will have the door opened.

What father among you, if his son asked for a fish, would hand him a snake? Or if he asked for an egg, hand him a scorpion?

If you then, evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

3) Reflection

? The Gospel today continues to speak about the theme of prayer, which began with the teaching of the Our Father (Lk 11, 1-4). Today Jesus teaches that we should pray with faith and insistence, without giving up. For this he uses a provocative parable.

? Luke 11, 5-7: the parable that provokes. As always when Jesus has an important thing

to teach, he has recourse to a comparison, to a parable. Today, he tells us a strange story which ends with a question, and he addresses the question to the people who listened to him and also to us who today read or listen to the story. "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say: "My friend, lend me three loaves because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him; and the man answers from inside the house: "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now and my children are with me in bed: I cannot get up to give it to you". Before Jesus himself gives the answer, he wants our opinion. What would you answer: yes or no?

? Luke 11, 8: Jesus responds to the provocation. Jesus gives his response: "I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it to him for friendship's sake, persistence will make him get up and give his friend all he wants". If it were not Jesus, would you have had the courage to invent a story in which it is suggested that God expects our prayers to see himself free from blows. The response of Jesus strengthens the message on prayer, that is: God always expects our prayer. This parable reminds us of another one, also found in Luke's Gospel, the parable of the widow who insists to obtain her rights before the judge who respects neither God nor justice and who pays attention to the widow only because he wants to free himself from the insistence of the woman (Lk 18, 3-5). Then Jesus draws the conclusion to apply the message of the parable to life.

? Luke 11, 9-10: the first application of the Parable. "So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, everyone who searches finds, everyone who knocks will have the door opened". To ask, to search, to knock at the door. If you ask, you will receive. If you search, you will find, if you knock the door will be opened for you. Jesus does not say how much time the request should last, knock at the door, search, but the result is certain.

? Luke 11, 11-12: the second application of the parable. "What father among you, if his son asked for a fish, would hand him a snake? Or if he asked for an egg, hand him a scorpion?" This second application makes us see the type of public listening to the words of Jesus and also his way of teaching under the form of dialogue. He asks: "You who are a father, when your son asks you for a fish, would you give him a snake?" The people answer: "No!" "And if he asks you for an egg, would you give him a scorpion?" -"No!" Through dialogue, Jesus involves the people in the comparison and, from the responses he receives from them, the commitment with the message of the parable.

? Luke 11, 13: The message: to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "If you then evil as you are, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!". The greatest gift that God has for us is the gift of the Holy Spirit. When we were created, he breathed his spirit into our nose and we became living beings (Gen 2, 7). In the second creation through Faith in Jesus, he gives us the Holy Spirit again, the same Spirit who made the Word become incarnate in Mary (Lk 1, 35). With the help of the Holy Spirit, the process of the Incarnation of the Word continues up to the hour of his death on the Cross. At the end, at the hour of death, Jesus commits the spirit to the Father: "Into your hands I commit my Spirit" (Lk 23, 46).

Jesus promises us this Spirit as the source of truth and of understanding (Jn 14, 14-17; 16, 13), and a help in the persecutions (Mt 10, 20; Ac 4, 31). This Spirit cannot be bought with money at the Supermarket. The only way of obtaining it is through prayer. After nine days of prayer the abundant gift of the Spirit is obtained on the day of Pentecost (Ac 1, 14; 2, 1-4).

4) Personal questions

? How do I respond to the provocation of the parable? A person who lives in a small apartment in a large city, how will she answer? Would she open the door?

? When you pray, do you pray convinced that you will obtain what you ask for?

5) Concluding prayer

I give thanks to Yahweh with all my heart,
in the meeting-place of honest people, in the assembly.
Great are the deeds of Yahweh,
to be pondered by all who delight in them. (Ps 111,1-2)