

The Christian Who Doesn't Pray Treats God Like a Servant

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle B

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 11: 5-13.

Jesus said to his disciples: "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?"

Introductory Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you are the master of the universe, and yet you wish to listen to me and guide me. You know all things past, present and future, and yet you respect my freedom to choose you. Holy Trinity, you are completely happy and fulfilled on your own, and yet you have generously brought us into existence. You are our fulfillment. Thank you for the gift of yourself. I offer the littleness of myself in return, knowing you are pleased with what I have to give.

Petition:

Lord, through this meditation, grant me the grace of a greater dependence on you.

1. God Wants Us to Ask:

Sometimes we think that since God knows all things, we need not ask him for anything. We need only wait until God will give us what we need. Nothing could be further from the truth. In this passage, Jesus doesn't say not to worry; instead he says that our Heavenly Father will gladly and lovingly provide whatever we need, provided we ask for it. One reason why God has arranged things this way is because if our needs were automatically provided for, a great number of us would not even realize there is a God, or we would easily forget him. There are affluent societies in which the people's material needs are taken care of easily. Does such a situation remind the people of God, his power, or his love? When we ask God to provide for our needs, we implicitly recognize his existence and authority in our lives. God wants us to do this.

2. Petitions in Prayer Increase My Faith:

But there are even more important reasons God wants us to ask. It is in asking that our faith grows. The more I ask, the more I come into a personal relationship with God. If I never had to turn to him for my needs, I would never realize how much he wants to be a part of my life. But when I have to ask, especially if I have to put some time and effort into it, then, when my needs are satisfied, it will be very clear that God did it. It will be clear that it wasn't me, or luck, or anything else, but God. Don't be afraid to ask. Develop your faith by doing so.

3. When I Don't Ask for What I Need, I Treat God as My Servant:

When we expect God to give us all we need without asking, are we not placing the whole burden of our salvation on him and nothing on ourselves? Are we not in a sense being lazy? You know what I need, Lord. Just give it to me, take care of it, while I focus on my own interests. Not only is this laziness, it is pride, treating God like a servant whose role is to provide whatever I need. We forget he is God. Certainly God is generous and loving, willing to give us everything that is good for us; but he is still God, and he deserves our respect, adoration, and especially our gratitude.

Conversation with Christ:

Dear Jesus, so often I expect you to take care of me without my having to ask. Help me to live my dependence on you through the practice of asking you for my needs. Increase my faith through my prayer so that I see my real dependence on you and how much you do for me.

Resolution:

What do I most need today? I will ask God for it early and often.