

***Homily for March 14 2019
Thursday 1st Week of Lent***

- Knock knock.
- Who's there?
- Ya.
- Ya who?
- Yahoo! I'm just as psyched to see *you*!

Well today Jesus tells us his version of the knock knock joke but what he has to share with us is no laughing matter. Rather he uses the image of knocking to teach us something really important about prayer; which has to do with its outcome. In other words he is inviting us to understand that through prayer we can grow ever more deeply in carrying out the Father's will; as he taught us to pray in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy will be done". At the end of our passage from today's Gospel, prayer's outcome, that is the will of God, is described very clearly when Jesus says:

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."¹

Treat others in the way we would like to be treated is at the heart of what Jesus is saying here. The Golden Rule. Fairly easy right? Well no it is not so easy. Jesus said that the whole of the Old Testament is God's way of showing us that the Law, That is the Books of Moses, (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) are all about treating others the way we would like to be treated. This of course then finds a concentrated expression in the Ten Commandments where the second table of the Commandments is all about how we love others. Honouring parents, not stealing, not commitment adultery, not killing, not gossiping, not coveting. And what about the Prophets? These are all the writings in the Old Testament that apply the teaching of the Law to the very real events and lives of the Jewish people and by extension to our own lives.

In the Sermon on the Mount, where today's reading is from, Jesus says that he has come not to do away with the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them, that is to complete them. This means that he wants us to realize that while the commandments say we are not to kill, something that we can readily avoid, Jesus speaks about how when we harbour anger and bitterness towards another person we can kill them in our hearts. Jesus is saying that our Father is not only concerned about our out actions but also our inner attitudes. We are to treat people both outwardly and inwardly the way we could want to be treated. Jesus wants us to think about others as they would think about us and to treat others as we would like to be treated. And to live this way requires prayer.

So when Jesus says:

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

¹ [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition](#). (1993). (Mt 7:12). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

He is wanting us to know that this kind of prayer requires persistence that is best described by verbs like ask, seek and knock. Jesus promises us that if we truly desire to grow in fulfilling the Father's will to treat others as we would be treated there will be a conversion in our hearts. We will be changed from the inside out.

The good gift our Father is most wanting to give to us is a heart that is truly being changed so as to be more like the heart of Jesus. One of the clearest ways to describe the love of Jesus is to will the good, to want what is best for another person. That is to apply the principle:

So whatever you wish that people would do to you, do so to them

The way that this conversion happens, so we become less self centred and more Jesus and other centred is through prayer. Prayer that is focused, persistent and lifelong. For there is no more important, and at the same time more difficult work, we have in this life than to learn to love like Jesus. Thankfully we have the gift of prayer, daily in the Mass, in the Rosary, through Confession to grow ever more through these earthly years so that when we arrive heaven's gate and say:

- Knock Knock.
- And Jesus says:
- Whose there?
- We can say "I who?"
- And when he says "I who who?"
- We can say "I who learned in my life to love like you."
- For this kind of love is what the law and the prophets is all about. This kind of love is to fulfill the will of the Father.