

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2025 C

In a world of fast food, instant messaging, one-click shopping, and same-day surgery, God seems to have poor customer service at times. He makes us wait, He often does not answer questions, He does not believe the customer is always right, and He sometimes simply says **No**. Jesus tells us: ***“Ask, and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you;”*** but many of our prayers, even those that are quite unselfish and filled with concern for others, seem to fall on deaf ears and go unanswered. I often think that these words of Jesus are more of a caution than a promise: ask and you WILL receive – but what if it is not what YOU wanted? Seek, and you WILL find – but what if it is not what YOU were looking for? Knock, and you WILL enter; but what if it is not where YOU wanted to go?

Or even more simply - ***When I say, “Thy Will Be Done” in the Our Father, do I really mean it?*** Though these words do not appear in Luke’s abbreviated form of the Our Father, we know them well from Matthew’s version that we use in prayer. For many, it is the first prayer we learn, usually from parents – Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will Be Done. Of course, it’s nice when God’s will and ours coincide, and they often do. But what happens when circumstances make clear that what I want is not what God is sending?

Prayer is not intended to change God’s mind; it is meant to change ours. It is not for telling God what He needs to do; it is for learning what *I* need to do. This is where trust in prayer is critical. ***The kind of trust Jesus commends is NOT that we trust that God will simply give us whatever we ask; but rather, that we trust Him to give us whatever we need, including the strength to do HIS will.*** Entrusting ourselves and our loved ones to God is difficult, and we all fail at times. But that trust is also expressed in admitting our failures and starting over again, wiser and stronger because we have learned something more about God’s patience and mercy.

The dialogue with Abraham in Genesis teaches us that God's care extends to each person, individually; and the holiness of even a few is a source of security and hope for the many. God's patience with us is a reassurance when we become impatient with God or ourselves or others. Waiting for God may be hard, but that waiting does not result from God being stubborn or unwilling to give us good things. We simply don't have the divine perspective of eternity to know how and when all things need to work together for the good of those who love God, as St. Paul says. History is full of those stories ... if I had not had to stop at that red light, I would have been hit by that car; if I hadn't misplaced my keys, I would have missed that call from a friend; if I hadn't volunteered, I would never than made a difference in that child's life.

In God's will is our peace, as Jesus teaches us, even from the Cross. Our world is in such need of that peace. And while no one of us can resolve the problems that surround us, we can commit not to add to the turmoil and anger and division. Find some quiet time this week, even for a few minutes, and knock on the door of God's heart. Ask for the wisdom, sincerity, and trust to say "Thy Will Be Done," for there is no hope that is not contained in that saving will. Like the Apostles, say: "Lord, teach me to pray." ***You will find God always ready to listen and help, and never far away.***