



Thursday of the 1st Week of Lent



Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Esther C:12, 14–16, 23–25

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1–3, 7c–8 | **Response:** Psalm 138:3a

Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 51:12a, 14a

Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:7–12

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

Lent—this season we are called to—invites us, gently but firmly, to a journey not marked by the spectacle of grand gestures, but by the slow, steady persistence of a heart that listens. And in today’s Gospel, we are given an invitation from none other than our Lord Himself, an invitation that rings with a promise as clear and resolute as any declaration: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

Do not let the simplicity of this invitation fool you; within these words lies a challenge that demands more than passive expectation. It beckons us to an active pursuit of God—one marked by intentionality and trust. When Jesus speaks of asking, seeking, and knocking, He does not merely suggest an idle hoping. No—He calls us to engage, to press forward, to dare to knock on the door of heaven with the boldness of children who know they are loved and heard. There is an urgency in His words, an urgency not born of desperation but of a relationship that seeks, without ceasing, the face of God.

Now, let us not be naïve. This is not a simple “give me what I want” scenario, for God is not a vending machine dispensing wishes. No, what Christ reveals here is a profound truth about our relationship with our Heavenly Father: He knows what we need, and He will answer—not according to our whims, but according to His will. It is in the asking that we learn our true needs, in the seeking that we deepen our relationship with Him, and in the knocking that we persist in trust, knowing that the door will, indeed, be opened to us—though perhaps in a way that surprises us.

But I wonder, brothers and sisters, how often do we approach God like that? When we ask, do we ask with real expectation, or are we merely going through the motions, doubting that the door will open? When we seek, do we seek with a heart that is truly open, or do we seek only what we want to hear? And when we knock, do we knock with the conviction that God is always near, always ready to welcome us, or do we hesitate, fearing that our knocks will fall silent?

Lent invites us to examine these very questions, to search our hearts and discover where our trust truly lies. And this is not merely about personal spiritual growth; it is about a larger call to care for the world, to ask and seek not only for ourselves but for those who stand in need—those who knock at the door of our society, our communities, and our hearts. We are invited not only to ask for grace but to be grace for others, to become the hands and feet of Christ for those who cry out for justice, for dignity, for hope.

In Zambia, as in many parts of the world, there are those who seek not for riches but for the basic necessities of life—food, shelter, health, and peace. How often, I wonder, do we take for granted the very things that others knock on the doors of our societies to obtain? Lent calls us to an active engagement with these needs. We must ask ourselves—what are we doing in this season to ensure that our prayers are not only for our own benefit but for the benefit of those who suffer?

As we contemplate the life of Saint Leander of Seville—whose feast is traditionally remembered today—we are reminded of a man who knew well the meaning of asking, seeking, and knocking. Leander, a bishop in the 6th century, did not simply ask for God's grace in his own life but sought to bring the light of Christ to all he encountered. Saint Leander's work, particularly in his efforts to reconcile the Arian and Catholic communities, mirrors the call for reconciliation that Jesus gives us in the Gospel. Just as he sought peace and unity through the Church, we too are invited to seek peace in our communities, especially in a world so fractured by division and strife. Today, especially here in Zambia, where so many face economic hardships, we are reminded that the act of asking and seeking is not just for spiritual growth but for justice and mercy for those on the margins.

As we move through this holy season, and while we keep Pope Francis in our prayers, let us ask ourselves: Are we truly asking for what God wants to give us, or are we asking only for our own desires? Are we seeking with the kind of open heart that trusts God's plan, even when it's not what we envisioned? And are we knocking on doors of justice and compassion, ready to be the answer to the prayers of those who seek help and hope?

Lent calls us to deeper relationship, to more fervent prayer, to greater acts of mercy. The door is open. Let us walk through it, knowing that in our asking, seeking, and knocking, we are not alone. The Father is waiting, and His answer is always far more than we can imagine.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.