

MAY 16, 2026 FATHER HENK VAN MEIJEL

Jesus, at the Last Supper, it gets a little convoluted, and it might we have to read this a few times before it really sticks. At least, I have to read it a few times, so I presume you also have to read it a few times before it sticks.

But Jesus is really saying, “Ask the Father, ask me in my name and you will receive.” And there can be so many different misunderstandings about it, how we ask God.

I had a retreatant not too long ago who said, “It took me 70 years to ask, to pray in the proper way and to ask God in the proper way.” And as this person said, “Well,” he says, “I used to pray, but, you know, I only would pray if I needed something.”

“So, I've not been smart with my money. I've spent too much money on personal entertainment. Now, I cannot pay the rent, and I quickly go on my knees and say, ‘Father, give me some money, okay?’” And, like, as if a bundle of money would drop down in front of him. And that's the wrong way to ask.

Can I ask in a submissive way? Can I ask in humility? “God, use me according to your desire,” that might be a different kind of prayer.

Instead of asking for material things, I can see that someone who is living on the street and does not have a meal might pray for money or for a meal. Or in some of our world's places, like the Sudan, where there's an awful civil war going on, where there's so much hunger, I can see that someone literally will pray for a meal, and it's not necessarily bad.

But most of us, we ask for the wrong things, just like we can ask to heal my relationship with my sister, for example. “I'm in trouble with my

sister, and God, can you heal this relationship?” No. There's two people who also have to do their part. I have to reach out to my sister and I have to take that action, and it's up to my sister to respond. And if she does not want to respond and if she doesn't accept my way of reaching out, then there's not going to be any healing.

But then, at the same time, if that doesn't happen, we can say, “Lord, may only good come from this relationship, may only good come from this time that we cannot see eye to eye,” and then we're moving forward.

The Saint Ignatius of Loyola, in his spiritual exercises, it starts up with the first principle and foundation. It's about giving our life to God.

And then, it kind of ends with, “Lord, I'm indifferent. A long life, a short life, sickness or health, fame or dis fame, it doesn't matter, as long it is for you.” And that is so important, too. That's holy indifference. “Lord, let it happen. Guide me, show me the way.” And in that, God will show the way.

In our first reading from Acts, we have Apollos. It's kind of a nice reading because St. Paul is going to Galatia, which is today Turkey, and he's preaching all over the place. And here, all of a sudden, this Apollos shows up out of the blue, and he's also preaching Jesus, but he was not aware yet of the resurrected Christ.

And so, he's doing wonderful work. He's from Alexandria. He's well-educated. But he did not know about the resurrection, and he has to just be educated a little bit.

Again, we have some people coming forward in the synagogue and tell him about the resurrection. He says, “Okay, here we go. Now I understand.” And again, it's God who sent two people in the synagogue to put it straight for him. And so, he just continues to preach.

It did not matter the cost of it, but he just goes along and preaches. And it is so important to understand that, how we can give our life to God. But it is up to God to use each one of us according to God's desire.

And so, can I be open to God's guidance? Can I have holy indifference?

Today on the Universal calendar, we have Simon Stock. He's not a saint, never was declared a saint for some reason I don't understand. But yet, he's on the calendar for the saints.

And Simon Stock was actually the first generation of Carmelites who could not be living on Mount Carmel as hermits in the Holy Land. As Islam took over, they were driven out, and he set up quite a few houses in Europe for the Carmelite communities.

He is the one, the tradition has, that Our Lady gave him the brown scapular, so well-known for the Carmelites. And so many people wear the scapular as a sign that God is with them and that they, hopefully, one day, will be with God.

Simon Stock, too, he was a man who just gave his life to God. And actually, interestingly, his last name "Stock" actually kind of meant "stump." Tradition has that as a 12-year-old, he already became a hermit and lived in a hollow tree, very young.

It's almost unbelievable that, basically, a child already embraced the life of a hermit very early on. At age 82, he was elected Superior General of the Carmelites.

He did an enormous amount of work, and he transformed the Carmelites from a group of people who were hermits to a mendicant order of friars, friars who lived in the cities, in communities, and who went out to preach, to preach especially to those who were living on the margins, and to live in poverty.

But again, being open to God, that is the most important part. Can I be open to God in my life? Can I be open to let God lead us?

And if we can have an open mind, then we'll see how God opens doors and closes doors. And it does not mean that we don't bring prayers to God and that we don't ask God, but we ask God in a different way.

It's not anymore about asking God for material things, for whatever people ask for. And it's something we just have to learn, and it's part of our faith journey to learn to ask in a proper way, and to realise that God is not Santa Claus, that Jesus is not Santa Claus, and that they don't just give you presents through the chimney like Santa Claus does, but that God is active in our life and God will give us what we need. Amen.