

[A reminder to pray the Litany of the Saints on the three Rogation Days preceding Ascension Thursday, which is a Holy Day of Obligation.](#)

Saint Thomas explains the Gospel for the 5th Sunday after Easter.

*Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in my name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh, when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will shew you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name; and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to him: Behold, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*

CHRYS, Again our Lord shows that it is expedient that He should go: And in that day shall you ask Me nothing.

AUG. The word ask here means not only to seek for, but to ask a question: the Greek word from which it is translated has both meanings.

CHRYS. He says, And in that day, i.e. when I shall have risen again, you shall ask Me nothing, i.e. not say to Me, Show us the Father, and, Where do You go? since you will know this by the teaching of the Holy Ghost; or, you shall ask Me nothing, i.e. not want Me for a Mediator to obtain your requests, as My name will be enough, if you only call upon that: Verily, verily, I say to you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Wherein He shows His power; that neither seen, or asked, but named only to the Father, He will do miracles.

Do not think then, He said, that because for the future I shall not be with you, that you are therefore forsaken; for My name will be a still greater protection to you than My presence: Hitherto have you asked nothing in My Name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

THEOPHYL. I or when your prayers shall be fully answered, then will your gladness be greatest.

CHRYS. These words being obscure, He adds, These things have I spoken to you in proverbs, but the time comes when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs; for forty days He talked with them as they were assembled, speaking of the kingdom of God. And now, He says, you are in too great fear to attend to My words, but then, when you see Me risen again, you will be able to proclaim these things openly.

THEOPHYL. He still cheers them with the promise that help will be given them from above in their temptations: At that day you shall ask in My Name. And you will be so in favor with the Father, that you will no longer need my intervention: And I say not to you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loves you. But that they might not start back from our Lord, as though they were no longer in need of Him, He adds, Because you have loved Me: as if to say, The Father loves you, because you have loved Me; when therefore you fall from My love, you will straightway fall from the Father's love.

AUG. But does He love us because we love Him; or rather do not we love Him, because He loved us; This is what the Evangelist says, Let us love God, because God first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). The Father then loves us, because we love the Son, it being from the Father and the Son, that we receive the love from the Father and the Son. He loves what He has made; but He would not make in us what He loved, except He loved us in the first place.

HILARY. Perfect faith in the Son, which believes and loves what has come forth from God, and deserves to be heard and loved for its own sake, this faith confessing the Son of God, born from Him, and sent by Him, needs not an intercessor with the Father; wherefore it follows, And have believed that I came forth from God.

His nativity and advent are signified by, I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. The one is dispensation, the other nature. To have come from the Father, and to have come forth from God, have not the same meaning; because it is one thing to have come forth from God in the relation of Sonship, another thing to have come from the Father into this world to accomplish the mystery of our salvation. Since to come forth from God is to subsist as His Son, what else can He be but God.

CHRYS. As it was consolatory to them to hear of His resurrection, and how He came from God, and went to God, He dwells again and again on these subjects: Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. The one was a proof that their faith in Him was not vain: the other that they would still be under His protection.

AUG. He came forth from the Father, because He is of the Father; He came into the world, because He showed Himself in the body to the world. He left the world by His departure in the body, and went to the Father by the ascension of His humanity, nor yet in respect of the government of His presence, left the world; just as when He went forth from the Father and came into the world, He did so in such wise as not to leave the Father. But our Lord Jesus Christ, we read, was asked questions, and petitioned after His resurrection; for when about to ascend to Heaven He was asked by His disciples when He would restore the kingdom to Israel; when in Heaven He was asked by Stephen, to receive his spirit.

And who would dare to say that as mortal He might be asked, as immortal He might not? I think then that when He says, In that day you shall ask Me nothing, He refers not to the time of His resurrection, but to that time when we shall see Him as He is: which vision is not of this present life, but of the life everlasting, when we shall ask for nothing, ask no questions, because there will remain nothing to be desired, nothing to be learnt.

ALCUIN. This is His meaning then: In the world to come, you shall ask me nothing: but in the mean time while you are traveling on this wearisome road, ask what you want of the Father, and He will give it you: Verily, verily, I say to you, Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you.

AUG. The word whatsoever must not be understood to mean anything, but something which with reference to obtaining the life of blessedness is not nothing. That is not sought in the Savior's name, which is sought to the hindering of our salvation; for by in My name must be understood not the mere sound of the letters or syllables, but that which is rightly and truly signified by that sound. He who holds any notion concerning Christ, which should not be held of the only Son of God, does not ask in His name.

But he who thinks rightly of Him, asks in His name, and receives what he asks, if it be not against his eternal salvation; he receives when it is right he should receive; for some things are only denied at present in order to be granted at a more suitable time. Again, the words, He will give it you, only comprehend those benefits which properly appertain to the persons who ask.

All saints are heard for themselves, but not for all; for it is not will give simply, but will give you; what follows, Hitherto have you asked nothing in My name, may be understood in two ways: either that they had not asked in His name, because they had not known it as it ought to be known; or, you have asked nothing, because with reference to obtaining the thing you ought to ask for, what you have asked for is to be counted nothing.

That therefore they may ask in His name not for what is nothing, but for the fullness of joy, He adds, Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. This full joy is not carnal, but spiritual joy; and it will be full, when it is so great that nothing can be added to it.

AUG. And this is that full joy, than which nothing can be greater, viz. to enjoy God, the Trinity, in the image of Whom we are made.

AUG, Whatsoever then is asked, which appertains to the getting this joy, this must be asked in the name of Christ. For His saints that persevere in asking for it, He will never in His divine mercy disappoint. But whatever is asked beside this is nothing, i.e. not absolutely nothing, but nothing in comparison with so great a thing as this. It follows: These things have I spoken to you in proverbs; but the time comes when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.

The hour of which He speaks may be understood of the future life, when we shall see Him, as the Apostle said, face to face, and, These things have I spoken to you in proverbs, of that which the Apostle said, Now we see as in a glass darkly (1 Cor 13:12). But I will show you that the Father shall be seen through the Son; For no man knows the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him (Matt 11:17).

GREG. When He declares that He will show them plainly of the Father, He alludes to the manifestation about to take place of His own majesty which would troth show His own equality with the Father and the procession of the coeternal Spirit from both.

AUG. But this sense seems to be interfered with by what follows: At that day you shall ask in My name. What shall we have to ask for in a future life, when all our desires shall be satisfied; Asking implies the want of something. It remains then that we understand the words of Jesus going to make His disciples spiritual, from being carnal and natural beings.

The natural man so understands whatever he hears of God in a bodily sense, as being unable to conceive any other. Wherefore whatever Wisdom said of the incorporeal, immutable substance are proverbs to him, not that he accounts them proverbs but understands them as if they were proverbs. But when, become spiritual, he has begun to discern all things, though in this life he see but in a glass and in part, yet does he perceive, not by bodily sense, not by idea of the imagination, but by most sure intelligence of the mind, perceive and hold that God is not body, but spirit; the Son shows so plainly of the Father, that He who shows is seen to be of the same nature with Him who is shown.

Then they who ask, ask in His name, because by the sound of that name they understand nothing but the thing itself which is expressed by that name. These are able to think that our Lord Jesus Christ, in so far as He is man, intercedes with the Father for us in so far as He is God, hears us together with the Father: which I think is His meaning when He says, And I say not to you that I will pray the Father for you. To understand this, viz. how that the Son does not ask the Father, but Father and Son together hear those who ask, is beyond the reach of any but the spiritual vision.

CHRYS. The disciples were so refreshed with the thought of being in favor with the Father, that they say they are sure He knows all things: His disciples said to Him, Now you speak plainly, and speak no proverb.

AUG. But why do they say so, when the hour in which He was to speak without proverbs was yet future, and only promised? Because, our Lord's communications still continuing proverbs to them, they are so far from understanding them, that they do not even understand their not understanding them.

CHRYS. But since His answer met what was in their minds, they add, Now we are sure that you know all things. See how imperfect they yet were, after so many and great things now at last to say, Now we are sure &c. saying it too as if they were conferring a favor. And need not that any man should ask you, i.e. you know what offends us, before we tell You, and you have relieved us by saying that the Father loves us.

AUG. Why this remark? To one Who knew all things, instead of saying, you need not that any man should ask You; it would have been more appropriate to have said, you need not to ask any man; yet we know that both of these were done, viz. that our Lord both asked questions, and was asked. But this is soon explained; for both were for the benefit, not of Himself, but of those whom He asked questions of, or by whom He was asked. He asked questions of men not in order to learn Himself, but to teach them: and in the case of those who asked questions of Him, such questions were necessary to them in order to gain the knowledge they wanted; but they were not necessary to Him to tell Him what that was, because He knew the wish of the inquirer, before the question was put. Thus to know men's thoughts beforehand was no great thing for the Lord, but to the minds of babes it was a great thing: By this we know that you came forth from God.

HILARY. They believe that He came forth from God, because He does the works of God. For whereas our Lord had said both, I came forth from the Father, and, I am come into the world from the Father, they

testified no wonder at the latter words, I am come into the world, which they had often heard before. But their reply shows a belief in and appreciation of the former, I came forth from the Father. And they notice this in their reply: By this we believe that you came forth from God; not adding, and are come into the world, for they knew already that He was sent from God, but had not yet received the doctrine of His eternal generation. That unutterable doctrine they now began to see for the first time in consequence of these words, and therefore reply that He spoke no longer in parables. For God is not born from God after the manner of human birth; His is a coming forth from, rather than a birth from, God. He is one from one; not a portion, not a defection, not a diminution, not a derivation, not a pretension, not a passion, but the birth of living nature from living nature. He is God coming forth from God, not a creature appointed to the name of God; He did not begin to be from nothing, but He came forth from an abiding nature. To come forth has the signification of birth, not of beginning.

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