

I heard once of a businesswoman who would never end a work call, letting the other party hang up. She said that several times she had gained an advantage in accidentally hearing the other party (not realising the line was still 'live') relate to someone else what they were really thinking of her or the issue at hand. Sneaky? Perhaps – but it was only bringing to light what was beneath the surface. In a way, that is exactly what Jesus does in today's Gospel. It seems a bit rough in language and that Jesus is 'being mean' to a non-Jewish woman. However, Jesus was only expressing the language ('house dogs') that Jewish believers used when referring to gentiles privately, but not publicly. He said nothing more than what people thought on this issue. Jesus doesn't respond to the women at first and only replies at a repeated request. This reminds me of efforts to rouse up a contractor in Ireland! Response times can vary and you need to repeat the request over and over, so that they know this is a need not a whim.

Like the businesswoman using a 'live-line' to hear the actual truth, a regular joke told when someone becomes a priest or bishop in Ireland is that it is 'the last time you go hungry – or hear the truth'. Perhaps that is a mercy for us – at least it bathes people in

some redeeming light of God rather than revealing the coarsened opinion (sometimes) privately held. As priests, we also get privileged insight into the real faith of people, the persistent prayer that they keep going – not because it had instant 'success', but because it was a prayer that sustained them. Candles were lit through disappointment, and Novenas prayed when nothing changed. Even non-practicing nominal Christians recognise this and will ask a parent or grandparent for 'a prayer'. Mind you, I am surprised at how a parental request for a prayer when facing some problem themselves is not always met as positively – 'sure you know I don't pray!' Still, parents stand by their adult

children because love does such things. They have a faith that is persistent and insistent and refuses to move away. Their faith will no more leave Jesus than that their faith would give up on their own flesh and blood. We need to maintain our own 'live-line' with the Lord, in and out of season. It needs persistence, faith and humility. Stick with the Lord, or as we say in Irish, 'fan go fóill' (hang on a bit) ... don't walk away sad.

— Tom Cox

Lamb of God, you take away the sins, ...

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins
of the world.

Blessed are those called to the supper
of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 129:7)

With the Lord there is mercy;
in him is plentiful redemption.

Prayer after Communion

Made partakers of Christ through these
Sacraments,

we humbly implore your mercy, Lord,
that, conformed to his image on earth,
we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.



Reflection

When have you been pleasantly
surprised by the goodness of
another person?



Lesson

God saw everything that he had
made, and indeed, it was very
good (Gen 1:31).



Prayer

Father, help me to welcome others,
as I would like them to welcome
me.

