Ask in My Name.

(John 16:23b-28)

John 16:23b: I am telling you the truth: the Father will give you whatever you ask him for in my name.

Of all the promises given by Christ to his followers, this one is perhaps the most difficult to understand and to believe because our own experience about it has many times been so different: "the Father will give you whatever you ask him for in my name." Is this really true? For if this is true how then do we explain so many requests, so many urgent prayer pleas which Christians throughout the centuries have made to God while it seems He has not heard or answered? E.g. "Please God:

- Take away the agony and pain of suffering of the innocent! the suffering caused by hunger, want, by natural disasters, by senseless warfare, by seemingly incurable diseases like terminal cancer?
- Take away the evil and inhuman policies of apartheid under which millions have to suffer needlessly?
- Take away the senseless arms race and the threat of nuclear warfare?

On the face of it, it seems as if God does not hear and answer. Is this in fact so? Let us again look at the text and note how serious Christ is when He says: "I am telling you the truth!" If it is like Christ saying: "by my sacred heart - by my oath" so the then disciples - by lying, deceiving, his disciples use a lie because it makes to give them a spiritual injection to still the pain of departure and death."

The answer lies to my mind, in the 2 crucial phrases of the text: 1. in my name 2. ask
1. In my name: be in accordance with my being, my true nature, my purpose for you and for your life. And that being, that purpose is one of love, justice, renewal of life, liberation, forgiveness, victory over selfishness and arrogance, pride, and hunger for power. Whatever we ask in accordance with this name, this being, this purpose, the answer of the Father will be: YES! Whatever we ask in contradiction or in conflict with this name, this being, this purpose, the answer of the Father will be: NO!

2. Ask: True prayer always consists of 4 essential elements: Admission, confession, supplication, action. Zion one is necessary to fulfill the meaning of ASK. We normally accept the first 3 and exclude them in our prayers; we conveniently tend to expect or exclude the last (4) in our prayers: Action. True prayer always includes action. God says so many times: You ask - I will answer - through your own action: Answer your own prayer in the name of My Son! Ask ye the secret, the magic, the power! 

3. World poverty: the world has enough food to feed everyone but not for every one’s greed. The problem is not production but distribution.

4. Apartheid: the world has enough power and potential of eradicating this evil system without violence - if it really wanted to. If Christians around the world would say: No longer are we going to allow this to continue, do you really believe God will not answer?

5. Nuclear warfare: God is telling us all: the answer is development of nuclear war. If we are a reflection of the fear of nations for one another and their consequent struggle for power, the answer to your prayer lies in your hands: Answer your own prayer!
The puzzle, the pain; the unanswered question of ageing and death — will we ever conquer it? Will there ever be life without death?

And so we can continue with many requests, many of our pleadings to God which are included in our prayers. Where God responds by saying to us: "I will reflect on the problem; reflect on the cause; reflect on your own ability and selflessness; as I train to solve your problems through my grace, through my Son, as I am Jesus and through trust me for all these prayers for those which remain unanswered. That does not imply that God will not keep his word; it does not imply that Christ's promise is revoked or invalid. It only implies that there are sources of God's power to conquer a overcome our and suffering which we have not yet uncovered — and one of which will be revealed to us and given to us once we are ready to receive this power. Therefore never get weary of addressing your prayer to God. "I am telling you the truth, Christ says, "the Father will give you whatever you ask him for in my name."

Amen.