“Are we there yet?” How many parents have heard that question from their child? And how many times have they heard that question from their child? Trips can be a lesson in patience, for children and for parents.

Right before today’s part of the Gospel, the Pharisees are acting like children. They’re asking Jesus when the Kingdom of God would finally come. Jesus sensed their impatience. It’s like they were criticizing God for being slow.

Don’t we do that, too? It’s often our experience that the response to our prayers is delayed. We want to force God’s hand. Hurry up, God! It’s like one of St. Augustine’s prayers: Lord, give me patience – right now!

Jesus sets us straight in this Gospel. It’s why he teaches us to never get tired of praying. Jesus is talking here about petition prayer, intercessory prayer, where we’re asking God for something for ourselves or for someone else. In this Gospel, Jesus gives us some prayer lessons.

The first is that when I’m praying for something for myself or others, my request has to fit in with helping me build up God’s kingdom on earth. That has to be the ultimate goal of every “gimme” prayer. I could pray for a *Ferrari*, but would it help me build up God’s kingdom? Probably not!

So the Rolling Stones were right: *You can’t always get what you want.* But the next line of their song was wrong: *if you try sometime, you just might find, you get what you need.* God will always give His faithful what we need. But God may or may not give us what we want, if it doesn’t help us build up his kingdom on earth.

The second lesson is don’t get tired of praying, be persistent in prayer. Persistence shows we sincerely trust that God is a loving Father and will come through for us. St. Monica, prayed 30 years

for the conversion of her wild pagan son, Augustine. St. Mother Teresa persisted in prayer the last 20 years of her life without any consolation. God's love was strong enough to bring both of them through their discouragement and weariness because of another aspect of prayer we probably need to strengthen:

And that's being absolutely convinced that God wants us to be happy, wills only good for us, and always acts justly. And for those reasons, sometimes God's answer to our prayers is no, or not yet, or we get a different answer than we expected. That's when God is like a parent who puts a sick child in a hospital. It's not to be mean, but to get them well, even though it doesn't look that way to their kids.

Likewise, we think we know what's best for us when we pray; but we have to be able to admit maybe we don't. There is a bigger picture. I am a part of God's plan; it's not all about me. Christian lives are best seen against a bigger horizon, yet with confidence God loves each one of us and will give us his best.

Jesus's last pointer in our Gospel about prayer is to keep faith. Stay confident in God, never doubt God responds with love to our prayers, don't lose heart. Christian lives are an act of trust. We stay faithful to Christ throughout all the seasons of our lives, good times and bad, because we know we are loved and we'll receive the right thing at the right time – in God's time, not ours.

Believe deep down in your guts that Christ will come again, that God will have the last word, that love and goodness will prevail, despite our sufferings and the sufferings we see around us. Jesus is our friend who never gives up on us; let's not give up on him. He came down to our level so he could raise us up to his level. Persevere in prayer. It's worth it. Continue to build God's magnificent kingdom on this earth, and God promises to give us good things, not just in the next life, but in this one, too.