

29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME C



Because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her.

THE GOSPEL: Luke 18:1-8

Persistence
made
the crotchety judge give in
to the tough old
widow.

Lord,
you made this crystal clear:
to petition is good,
to pester even
better.

We come to you like the widow,
banging on your door,
day and night.

Put her type of faith into
our hearts.

1st Reading: Exodus 17:8-13



Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset.

The staff of God
was too much for him.
Moses' arms became weary.

Aaron and Hur, one on each side,
held those hands up
until sunset.

Lord,
when hope,
energy and prayer wane,

let Aaron or Hur—or any friend—support us.
Help us endure, through your friends.
Let us never stop praying
that you win all the
battles.

THE SECOND READING 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

***I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus:
proclaim the word.***

Lord,
We ask for fidelity in faith and wisdom.
Let us proclaim your word
in all our actions,
whether we
feel like it
or not. (Annie Osdieck)

REFLECTION 1: Pray at all times and trust in the Lord

1. This week's readings focus on the need for prayer and trust in the Lord, even when we feel isolated and despondent.

To this end, the **First Reading** tells the story of Moses, who is helped by his friends to continue brandishing the 'staff of God' even when he is too tired to raise his arms. Together they help to contribute to the victory against Israel's enemies, the Amalekites. The **Psalmist** puts all his trust in God, knowing that the Lord will guard his going and coming at all times.

St Paul encourages Timothy to be faithful to the Scriptures, which are inspired by God and a source of wisdom (**Second Reading**). Timothy is to proclaim the word, and support and encourage others with great patience.

The **Gospel** passage, sometimes called the 'Parable of the Persistent Widow', or of the 'Unjust Judge', reflects on the need to pray continually. We are to persist in our petitions, even if at first the Lord appears deaf to our pleading.

REFLECTION 2: Not Just Any Kind of Prayer

There is a vivid contrast in today's parable—between the worldly-wise and unscrupulous

judge, who is waiting for the usual bribe, and the seemingly inexperienced widow, who has been defrauded of her property after the death of her husband. What is really at issue, however, is the wisdom of the agnostic judge, who lives in the “real world,” and the apparent naivete of the poor widow who is relying on the help of God, in whom she trusts implicitly. The judge trusts in his cleverness; the widow trusts in the God of her prayers. We must note, however, that it is not just any kind of prayer that will merit a response. Effective prayer in this case is a doggedly persistent and persevering prayer. We are not told how long we must pray in order to finally receive God’s response, but the answer seems to be as long as it takes. One important caveat must be observed: that is, for the good that God sees in our situation, rather than some illusory goal that is not ultimately in our best interests.

The most perfect prayer of trust is found in those few but emphatic words of Jesus as he confronted his death in the garden of Gethsemane. He asks first of all for the humanly comprehensible liberation from his plight. But his implicit faith in his heavenly Father’s goodness enables him to rise above the merely human plane and to accept his Father’s decision, come what may: “Not my will but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). In a secular, self-centered universe, such a cry will be considered naive, but in the universe that includes God and a life beyond this one, these words of trust are the most perfect expression of human wisdom and generosity.

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