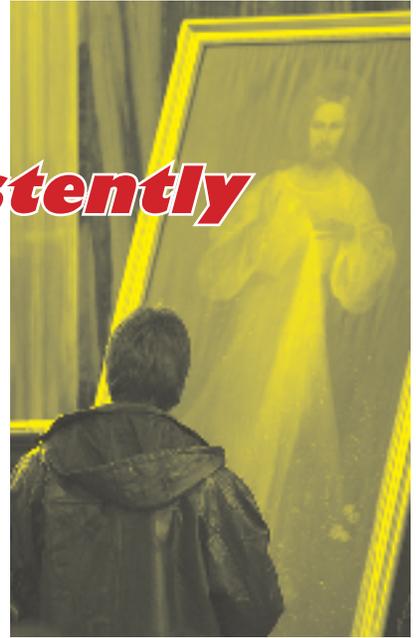


Praying Persistently



I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Ex 17:8-13)

Amalek vs. Israel

⁸Then Amalek* came and waged war against Israel in Rephidim.^e

Command of Moses to Joshua

⁹So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some men for us, and tomorrow go out and engage Amalek in battle. I will be standing on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

Execution of command

¹⁰Joshua did as Moses told him: he engaged Amalek in battle while Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of the hill.

Hands raised, hands down spell victory or defeat

¹¹As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. ¹²Moses’ hands, however, **grew tired**; so they took a rock and put it under him and he sat on it. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady until sunset.

Victory of the Israelites over Amalek

¹³And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the sword.

THE FOCUS: Growing Tired

COMMENTARY

- En route to Mt. Sinai, the Israelites encounter the Amalekites. These are fierce fighters in the desert who try to destroy Israel, an intruder from their point of view.
- Here in v.9, Moses and Joshua become warriors. Moses makes the strategy. Joshua will directly fight with the Amalekites, and Moses will serve as an inspiration (standing on hilltop).
- V.10 fulfills what is said in v.9.
- V.11 tells us something unusual (funny). Hands raised = victory of Israel, defeat of Amalek. Hands down = victory of Amalek, defeat of Israel.
- What is the connection between the position of the hands and the result of the war?
- We just accept what is described in the text.

- One important observation in v.12: Moses’ hands “grew tired” (*nangawit*).
- There should be a remedy to this.
- Aaron and Hur support his hands till sunset. • The result: Israel is victorious over Amalekites.

REFLECTIONS

The setting of the reading is war. It tells us how Israel wins the war. By Moses’ standing position and his hands raised. From this moment, we focus on “growing tired.”

The message of the reading is overcoming fatigue. We should overcome what hinders us from solving our problems.

The source of encouragement must not be kept out of sight if we want to overcome our “enemies.”

We need people to support us in our life struggles.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7)

**OUR HELP IS FROM THE LORD,
WHO MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH.**

SECOND READING (2 Tim 3:14—4:2)

First Command

¹³But wicked people and charlatans will go from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. ¹⁴But you, **remain faithful** to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, ¹⁵and that from infancy you have known [the] sacred

scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ^{16*} ^k All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Second Command(s)

4 ^{1*} ^aI charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: ^{2b}**proclaim the word**; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

THE FOCUS: Remaining Faithful

COMMENTARY

- V.14 expresses the first command of Paul to Timothy. “Remain faithful” To what? What you have learned and believed. What you have known from infancy (v.15): **The sacred scriptures (OT)** gives wisdom for salvation
- V.16 tells what sacred scriptures is all about : inspired, useful for teaching, refutation, correction, training for righteousness, to make competent or equipped in every good work (v.17).
- 4:1-2 express a set of commands: proclaim the word, be persistent, convince, reprimand, encourage

REFLECTIONS

Paul reminds Timothy to remain faithful to the sacred scriptures.

The exhortation of Paul to Timothy gives prominence to the sacred scriptures.

As Christians, we should give importance to the sacred scriptures, Word of God. Like Timothy, we must remain faithful to the Bible.

The Holy Scriptures help us in many practical ways, especially in teaching, in correcting, etc.

It is our tool to teach and to train us to live holy lives. Without scriptures, we cannot know the full will of God. As disciples, we have to proclaim the word of God.

GOSPEL READING (Lk 18:1-8)

The teaching on praying always

^{1*} ^aThen he told them a parable about the necessity

for them to pray always without becoming weary.

The wicked judge

He said, ^{2c}“There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. ³And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, ‘Render a just decision for me against my adversary.’”

The persistent judge

⁴For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, ‘While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being,

The persistent widow

^{5^b}because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.””

The judge who gives in

⁶The Lord said, “Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says.

The God who gives what is due to his chosen people

⁷Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? ⁸I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.

The persistent faith

But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

THE FOCUS: Persistent Prayer

COMMENTARY

- The gospel of Luke is a gospel of prayers.
- Luke develops teachings on prayer more than the other evangelists.
- In v.1 Jesus teaches his disciples to pray always (to be persistent in prayer, *walang kapaguran*)
- The parable of the wicked judge or the persistent widow backs up the teaching of Jesus on persistent prayer.
- The parable presents two characters: judge and widow.
- The judge does not fear God and did not respect people (v.2).
- The widow is persistent in coming to the judge to give her justice (v.3).
- In v.4, the wicked judge gives in. His reasoning picks up his own description given by the narrator in v.2.
- V.5 expresses in a negative way the idea of persistence.
- Persistence can force the wicked judge to make

a just decision (*in favor of the widow*).

- In v.6, the Lord speaks on what the judge says. In a similar vein, God will not be slow to listen to the prayer of those who pray always, day and night (v.7).
- V.8 assures us the swiftness of God's response.
- V.8b poses a question which has an eschatological dimension (end-time).

REFLECTIONS

The Gospel Reading teaches us to persist in praying.

The Gospel text uses all kinds of vocabulary to convince us without becoming weary. (*walang kapaguran*)

This widow keeps bothering me. (*nangungulit*). Day and night (*non-stop, no giving up*). To pray persistently is to pray with feelings, with a sense of urgency.

It is a prayer with conviction, with so much energy put into it. It is a prayer of the one who loves justice and fairness. It is a prayer that lasts until the end of time.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

The First Reading encourages us to defy fatigue (to be persistent) in doing God's work.

The Second Reading encourages us to remain faithful (to be persistent)

The Gospel Reading encourages to pray persistently.

No one should get tired of praying.

No Christian should give up praying.

How to develop your sharing / homily

How long do you pray? How many minutes or hours?

In our rat race times, we wonder if we can find time to pray.

Many people find it hard to pray.

If ever they pray, they give up easily because they don't find God listening.

The Readings teach us to be persistent in prayer.

According to the First Reading, we must maintain the posture of praying at all times in order to give sup-

port to the struggle of our beloved ones.

We must realize the importance of giving continued support to our brothers and sisters in their struggles and wars against the enemy (poverty, injustices, threats to well-being).

We must also allow ourselves to be supported by others (like Aaron and Hur) to keep on going.

According to the Second Reading, persistence is expressed in remaining faithful.

Paul encourages Timothy to remain faithful to the sacred scriptures, the word of God, and teachings of Paul himself. The scripture itself gives us energy to persist.

The Gospel Reading through a parable teaches us to be persistent in prayer.

Why should we not?

Even a wicked judge can change his mind if we are persistent.

God is swift to answer persistent prayer.

When we are persistent, we give importance to our petitions.

What we pray for persistently must be important to us.

To give up easily is a bad sign.

It does not help anyone, even yourself.

You are doing a great disservice to the people you want to help.

It is not the Christian way to pray without persistence.

Praying persistently is keeping our lines always open to God.

The holy mass is the highest form of persistent prayer.

We remember his faithfulness to us as he persistently gives us his body and blood.

In the eucharist, Jesus comes down to us to acknowledge our persistent prayers.

He may not answer us right away, but he assures us that he will soon answer us.

He wants us to persist in prayer until he comes again, just as we are enjoined to celebrate the eucharist, until he comes again.

May he find this active faith when he comes again!

-Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. Today is World Mission Sunday.

2. How do you concretize your being a Christian missionary even in your area? (HM)