

## Twenty Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time C2022

I want to start the homily of this Sunday with a reference to the culture in which we live. If I was asked to describe our culture today, I would say that ours is the culture of easiness and speediness. Comparatively to what it was fifty years ago, things have changed a lot in our society.

That change has affected our mode of living, our ways of being and of relating to things. At the same time that things have become easy, they have also become speedy. We experience that with fast foods, transportation, telephones and instant messages through internet.

One of the consequences of this change is the loss of patience, the fear of waiting, the loosening of perseverance. Many people are seriously annoyed when there is a delay as we can see it at the airport, at the bus station, at the post office, at the line for confession, etc. Some others give up quickly when the commitments become demanding.

And yet prayer is above all waiting for God to respond to our request and supplication, being patient until his time comes as it does not correspond automatically to our human calendar. But, how can we be patient and waiting without perseverance and persistence?

That is what Jesus brings in today's Gospel in this parable of the widow and the wicked judge. The widow found justice only because she was determined and not discouraged by the indifferent attitude of the judge. Her insistence overcame his resistance, and at the end she obtained what she wanted, the resolution of her case.

What Jesus brings in this parable is not that God is indifferent to our prayers. He is not deaf to the cry of our appeals, on the contrary he has his own time to act and intervene in our life. But, he acts and intervenes especially for those who know how to persevere like the poor widow. If eventually the wicked judge gave in to the insistence of the widow, how much more will God do the same thing for his beloved ones who call out to him day and night? Yes, "he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.

As you can see, the parable brings to our awareness the fact that perseverance is a key to success in our relationship with God. Only those who persevere can taste the fruit of their hard work. The same is also true in marriage as well as in many commitments in society. We may find joy in the pleasures of the moment, but true happiness comes only with something of permanence. The happiest couples are not those hunting pleasures, but those who have persevered through the ups and the downs of life, with faith and trust in God.

In other words, what today's Gospel is asking of us is that we control our impatience; we learn to persevere in things we do. The drama of our culture is that, because we are used to quick results and fast services, we lose heart when there is a delay, for instance, when people do not change quickly, or when the situation does not change rapidly, etc.

Our hurry may bring us trouble; it may deteriorate a situation that would have been changed for the best if we had been patient. Sometimes a delay can be something good for us. For instance, God may delay his judgment on us so that we repent. He may

delay his answer to our prayer so that we may give him everything we are. It is for that reason that Jesus gives this parable so that we may always pray without becoming weary.

Human experience has shown that a good father sometimes refuses a request of a child. He does so, not because he is mean to him or because he does not love him, but rather because he knows that what the child is asking would hurt him more than help him. God acts sometimes like that with us. As we cannot foretell everything happening to us, God at times contains the answer to our prayers in order to keep us safe and on the right paths. After all, only God sees time wholly and entirely, and, therefore, only God knows what is good for us in the long run. That is why Jesus said that we should not be discouraged in prayer.

All that helps us understand why Jesus is asking if human faith will stand the long delays before the Son of Man should come. Will the Son of Man find faith on earth, asks Jesus? That is the challenge to which each one of us is confronted, namely to be able to keep our faith alive and intact until Jesus comes back, even if meanwhile we do not have the immediate answer to our prayers, especially in the sense we would like it to be. Perhaps, the right way to pray should be: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

How shall we pray, some would ask? There are two sorts of prayer: the formal prayer, which is the patrimony of the tradition of the Church and the circumstantial prayer, which is a conversation between the Lord and us flowing from our heart when confronted with the problems of life.

The circumstantial prayer is an expression of the feelings of the heart and the problems of life that we bring to the Lord. It could be a prayer of thanksgiving for the blessings received, a prayer of demand according to the problems dealt with or a prayer of repentance following the discovery of sins in our life, in others or in the world.

The basis for such prayer is the Bible in which God has given us his word. That word is capable of giving us wisdom for salvation; it is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training us in righteousness. Whatever might be the form of our prayer, formal or circumstantial, it must always be done with perseverance and insistence.

Now, let us ask the Lord to help us persevere in our prayer and commitment until the day of his return. Let us ask him the grace of faithfulness in the waiting of the fulfillment of his promise. God bless you!

**Exodus 17: 8-13; 2 Timothy 3: 14-4:2; Luke 18: 1-8**



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