

Homily OT 29 – (Year C) – October 20, 2019

EX 17:8-13; PS 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; 2 TM 3:14-4:2; LK 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. (Lk 18:1)

Jesus' timing—reminding us of the need for **perpetual prayer**—could not be more **perfect** for us here at Ss. Simon & Jude Cathedral, considering an *urgent need in our parish that was brought to my attention in just the past few days.*

More on that in a moment...

Today's Readings provide clear **marching orders** to confront the **challenges of being a faithful Catholic in 2019**. In particular, they reveal a *divinely devised interdependence* between the **priesthood** and the **laity**, which will become more evident as we consider the **circumstances** and **symbolism** in today's Scripture passages.

In his **1st Letter to the Thessalonians**—which is *not* one of the Readings for today's Mass, but which sums up the point of Jesus' parable perfectly—**St. Paul** exhorted the Thessalonians to...

Pray without ceasing. (1 Thess 5:17)

At first glance, St. Paul's demand seems impossible. How can we pray non-stop when we have to **sleep...and eat...and work...and talk** to other people...and do **a thousand other things** every day?

Well, in *God's providence*, it is precisely **the urgent situation here at our parish** that helps answer the question, *“How do we pray without ceasing?”*

Earlier this week our **Perpetual Adoration coordinator** informed us that we have **18 different hours**—eighteen specific one-hour blocks of time throughout the week—where we have *nobody signed up to be with Jesus in our Adoration Chapel.*

That may not seem like a big deal to someone who does not know **what Perpetual Adoration is**. So, let's start there:

What is Perpetual Adoration?

Perpetual Adoration is a **lay-driven ministry** where a person commits to a particular one-hour block—at the **same time**—on the **same day**—**every week**—in which to pray before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Now, **there are 168 hours in a week**. This means that, for Perpetual Adoration to bear its **intended spiritual fruit**, at least 168 people need to sign up to cover one of the open hours during the week. Each person **owns** a particular hour. For **example**, a particular parishioner's hour may be **every Thursday from 3PM – 4PM**.

Why is Perpetual Adoration such a vital **lay ministry**? Because when every hour of the week is covered by an “**adorer**” keeping vigil with Jesus, it means that we have **at least one person in our chapel**—*every minute of every day*—praying for **their** needs...for **your** needs...and the **needs** of our **Church** and **world**.

When Perpetual Adoration is running on **all 168 cylinders**, our little **chapel** here becomes a *nuclear reactor of holiness* and a *powerful weapon against Satan*.

From the time we started Perpetual Adoration at the Cathedral in **June of 2012**, the goal has always been to have *at least two people covering every one of the 168 hours per week*. That would only require **336 people**—which is not an unreasonable expectation at all, considering that we have upwards of **3,000 families** registered at the parish.

We've had varying levels of success *maintaining the standard of two adorers per hour* over these seven years, because it requires enough **committed parishioners** answering “yes” to a question that Jesus posed to his *drowsy disciples* in the **Garden of Gethsemane**:

“...could you not watch with me one hour?” (cf. Mt 26:40)

This is the time that everyone in this church should be asking themselves:

“Can I really *not* watch one hour *per week* with Jesus?”

And *if* not...

***WHY* not?**

Just as an **aside**, *the average American watches nearly 6 hours of TV per day—or 42 hours per week!* Add to that another approximately **3-4 hours per day that the average person spends on the Internet** and you get the picture.

The **bottom line is that when it comes to our spiritual life**, it's more often a matter of *won't*...than *can't*!

So...getting back to our situation...the day after I learned about our 18 hours with no adorers I preached about it at the 8:30AM daily Mass.

After that Mass, seven people went directly to the parish office and signed up for one of the open hours! When our coordinator asked them why they signed up they said, “I’d been thinking about it for a while but hadn’t been asked...until today.”

There are some very critical needs in the Church today. For starters, there are **scheming cardinals, bishops and priests** deliberately imposing a **radical secularist agenda** on the faithful in order to **change the Church into something she’s *not*...and which she never *has* been.**

I have long **believed—and *preached***—that the **corruption, confusion, ambiguity and division** which these **false shepherds** deliberately plant in the hearts and minds of the faithful will ***not*** be defeated by **synods, policies or programs *proposed by the very sowers of the discord.***

Rather—as has always been the case in the Church’s history—it will be a **holy remnant—a *small, but faithful band of priests and laity striving together for personal holiness***—who drive out the ***smoke of Satan*** which has entered the Church...and which is **running roughshod over the faith** of the innocent and unsuspecting.

In his **2nd New Testament Letter, St. Peter** described a situation to **his flock** that looks an awful lot like the mess **we find ourselves in** today:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their licentiousness, and because of them the way of truth will be reviled. (2

Pet 2:1-2)

St. Paul wrote something similar to **St. Timothy** in his 2nd New Testament letter:

...the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. (2 Tim 4:3-4 RSVCE)

This, by the way, is why the **Bible** is called the **Living Word of God**, because its **timeless truths** are as relevant **today** as they were in the 1st Century...precisely because *Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever* (cf. Heb 13:8).

Nevertheless, **not many of us** have any **direct, practical influence** over **unscrupulous** higher-ups in the **Vatican** or in **Bishop's Conference** in *hotbeds of dissent* like Germany. And yet, **God calls each of us—every single member of the faithful—to contribute to the holiness** of the Church and to **combat the evil** that opposes her.

Here, the circumstances of **today's 1st Reading** come into play. The Reading begins with these words:

In those days, Amalek came and waged war against Israel. (Ex 7:8)

War in Moses' time was different from war in our time. When we think of **war today**, we think of **battles between secular nations**. But as one Scripture scholar put it:

In the Old Testament, there were no “secular” wars. Every battle was both a physical and spiritual conflict, because the opposing armies always called on their respective gods. The conflict of nations was the conflict of their divinities, and the stronger divinities

won. So here as well: there is a spiritual battle going on here between the LORD God of Israel and the gods of the Amalekites...In this spiritual conflict, prayer is vital—God chooses to use it as his means to victory.

<https://www.thesacredpage.com/2019/10/prayer-as-warfare-29th-sunday-in-ot.html>

The war being waged on the faith today—as much from **within** the Church, as **without**—is no different, in **principle**. Although not a physical battle, the **turncoats in the Church hierarchy** attack **the foundations of the Catholic faith** under the **false front of inclusiveness**. Their weapon of **Mass destruction** is *dissent*...thinly disguised as **evangelization**.

And **they know exactly what they're doing**, even if their unsuspecting followers *don't!*

In our **1st Reading**, the **decisive Israelite victory** over the **Amalekites** provides a battle plan for us to effectively defend the Church today:

Moses...said to Joshua, “Pick out certain men, 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.” So Joshua did as Moses told him: he engaged Amalek in battle after Moses had climbed to the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur. (Ex 17:9-10)

Moses, the man of God, instructed his lieutenant—Joshua—to assemble an **army of faithful warriors** to oppose the false “gods”. Moses also had his own faithful collaborators—Aaron and Hur. **Each individual from the well-known Moses, to the unknown but courageous soldier on the battlefield, played a crucial role in the battle.**

The Reading continues:

As 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. Moses' 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. And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the sword. (Ex 7:11-13)

What is happening here?

Moses had to keep the staff of God raised up to give his army spiritual strength. But his **frail humanity**—symbolized by his **weary arms**—undermined his efforts. So, his faithful collaborators—Aaron and Hur—gave him a rock to lean on for support and held up his arms.

Psalm 144 reveals what the **rock** symbolizes:

Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my arms for battle, who prepares my hands for war. (Ps 144:1)

The Lord is the rock who trains a man of God to lead his people in the battle against false “gods”. The training ground is the priest’s personal prayer life. Aaron and Hur helped Moses to lean on the rock—to *depend on the Lord*.

Aaron and Hur also supported Moses’ arms—symbolizing the **just expectation of the faithful that their spiritual leaders be true men of prayer, constantly raising their arms in supplication and intercession for the people they have been given to lead.**

St. Paul's words to **Timothy** in our **2nd Reading** for today's Mass show us what it looks like **in practical terms** for a man of God to “**keep the staff of God raised**”.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus... proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. (2 Tim 4:1-2)

As for the faithful, whether they are the **prayer warriors** combating the **idols of this age** on the **spiritual battlefield of daily life**, or the **collaborators of the priest** who **pray for him** to hold high the standard of holiness before his people, *the interdependence between the priest and his people is indispensable in the victory of God's people over the internal and external attacks on our Catholic faith.*

In Perpetual Adoration, every one of these duties is fulfilled, particularly Jesus's command to pray constantly without growing weary.

No single individual can **pray without ceasing** for **168 hours** per week.

And no individual is **expected** to.

Instead, each of us—as an **individual** but **indispensable** member of the **Body of Christ**—contributes to the *victory of Christ*—by committing to **one hour per week in the Perpetual Adoration Chapel.**

Jesus posed this **terrifying question** at the end of his parable:

...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? (Lk 18:8)

Here the Lord speaks of the end of time.

But his question also applies to this great need for an army of **courageous and committed prayer warriors *today*** to rid the Church of the **false “gods”** that have been **smuggled in** by **shameless shepherds**.

Here’s the question **we all** must answer:

“When the Son of Man *comes to meet us in the Adoration Chapel,* will he find any of the faithful there to keep vigil with him?”

More specifically, will he find **you**?

If your answer is “**yes**”, then thanks be to God, ***the victory is assured.***

If the answer is “**no**”, then **where *will you be*** when he comes to find ***you***...in ***his*** chapel...at the **appointed hour**?