

Twenty-ninth Sunday Ordinary Time– Cycle C

October 20, 2019

Christ the Good Shepherd, ORCC

Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard

First Reading: Exodus 17:8-13

Psalm 121:1-2,3-4,5-6,7-8

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

Gospel: Luke 18:1-8

Welcome to Christ the Good Shepherd! To our enduring parishioners and new found-friends, you are welcome to hear God's word and be nourished at this Table where there is no partiality. Welcome to "**The Small Church with a Big Heart**"!

My sisters and brothers, "***Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work***" (2 Tim 3). You and I must ask God for a **gift of prayer**! Even that asking is a prayer! But, we hear in our readings today **the absolute necessity of praying always** without becoming weary.

Let's pause now asking our great God of Peace and Love to teach us how to pray; to guide us on this faith journey; and to affirm us today, tomorrow and beyond.

Are you and I at such a stage in life, of praying always? Most of us are not at that stage of life yet! There's time; there're opportunities for cultivating our prayer life as demonstrated by your presence here today in "**The Small Church with a Big Heart**"! Be patient, kind to yourself and affirm life anew.

The first reading, from the Book of Exodus, tells about Moses holding his hands in prayer. When he became weary, the others helped him keep his hands up in prayer. This story touches so many aspects of our own lives.

- We also **become weary** in praying;
- Sometimes we **don't even want to pray** at all;
- Sometimes **our whole being has lost interest** in prayer;
- **We need others to help us keep on praying**;
- Sometimes **we lose interest** in praying because **nothing seems to happen**;
- We pray and God seems silent;
- We pray and God seems to ignore us; and
- So we stop praying! That is natural enough.

In our world, if a person is working hard and gets no pay and no reward, then that person will stop working, unless s/he is a prisoner.

My sisters and brothers, let's be real, we, human beings just don't do things that have no result. **Moses is praying. He knows** that God hears him. **He can see** the results of his prayers. **When he stops** praying and lowers his hands, the battle changes. We might think: if God would show us the results of our prayers, then we might feel encouraged to pray more. That is surely a human sentiment and one that crosses our minds from time to time. But, you and I as Christians need to have courage

first to **try praying** and then perhaps **to try not praying** and to be honest about the differences in our lives.

Here, we are not speaking only about **prayers of petition** for ourselves, but also about **prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of adoration, prayers asking forgiveness, prayers of blessing, prayers of praise and prayers of intercession.** The Scriptures presume that we are praying. The Scriptures presume that we are people who want to pray and who are trying to pray. And that is surely at least a small desire in our lives. **The challenge is how to make this prayer, this relationship with God, the very center of our lives.**

Jesus, in today's Gospel, recommends only one method: keep praying! Persist in your prayer! Don't give up! Insist that God answer you! This is strong medicine for us. We must base our prayer on a belief in God and a belief that God is active in our world. In we have those two beliefs at the very foundation of our life, then we can persist in prayer with the help of God's mercy. You and I must pester God and keep on insisting that God give us what we need. In this struggle with God, our faith can deepen and our daily awareness of God's love, compassion and mercy can grow incredibly.

Let us ask during today's liturgy for the Holy Spirit to be in our hearts and our minds, strengthening us for the struggle and giving us this necessary courage, patient-endurance and grace. Let us give thanks for God's Peace and Love today, tomorrow and beyond! May you and I "***be competent, equipped for every good work***", by praying always!

Gracias de Dios para todos!