

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (*Luke 18:1-7*) *The Parable of the Persistent Widow*

Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ Jesus says: Pray always and don't be discouraged (Cf. *Luke 18:1*)

Prayer puts us under God's dominion and protection. God gives us freewill which is a precious gift and makes us like Himself. Thus, He will not force His divine will and salvation on us even though this is the best thing for us. However, when we pray we place ourselves under the rightful dominion God has over us, putting the little world around us into the correct order as God has intended from the beginning: His rightful dominion over all things. We come under the protection of God. We beg God to intervene in our life to protect us not only from the danger and evil that we can discern but also that which we are unaware of which He can see. With God's dominion over our lives through sincere prayer and obedience to His commandments, we are more able to discern evil from goodness, and have a conscience that is formed in God's truth.

Once our trust in God is complete, our battle becomes God's own battle. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, was warned of a vast army of enemies from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir advancing upon his land. These are the territories the Israelites did not invade when they came out from Egypt. In haste, Jehoshaphat had all his people assembled in the temple and implored the Lord's protection. *He said: Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.*" (*2 Chronicles 20:12*). The army of Jehoshaphat went into battle simply chanting praises of God! The vast army of enemies ended up killing each other as the Lord set ambushes of each against the other of the enemies of Israel. *Trust in the Lord and He will act* (Cf. *Psalm 37:5*).

Prayer widens our vision to see the reality and protects us from a tunnel vision. Because our physical eyes do not see it, we often forget that in reality God is always in charge. His permitting will gives us the freedom to exercise our freewill. We can use it to advance God's Kingdom on earth or add to the darkness that is enveloping the world. God's providing will provides like a very good and wise parent whatsoever is needed in every situation of his child's life provided the heart is open to receive it. Even a difficulty can become a grace if the heart is open to accept it. God does not sleep and is ever watchful of His children, ready to protect, help, guide, forgive or console when His children call out to Him in trust.

Prayer strengthens our faith and opens our heart to God's graces. A good parent always desires to communicate with his child to guide, instruct, protect and love. It is even more so with God. God speaks to His children in any way He so wishes: through others, through situations, through difficulties/suffering, His Word/Scripture, His holy Sacraments or directly to our hearts and minds. In prayer we open the way to God to speak to, renew/purify our heart and mind, instruct, guide and sanctify us. It is impossible to grow closer to God without sincere, consistent prayer. God always come with gifts of graces for every present moment. Praying with an open heart enables us to receive the graces we need to continue to walk on the path of truth.

Prayer is mighty work that only the faithful can do. Not everyone can pray. It needs faith and a desire to connect with God. Sadly, most people do not have these gifts although God wants to give faith to everyone and desires all to be saved. Those who can pray have a responsibility to the Lord to pray for those who cannot pray due to lack of faith. Prayer is mighty work as it paves the way for God's intervention in our world so much in need of God's mercy and intervention.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You are always at my side and are ever ready to respond to my call. Prayer is a gift from You. Thank You for this gift which is my lifeline to You for You are just a prayer away. I renew my baptismal consecration of my life to You so that my life can become a continual prayer of praise and thanksgiving. I open my heart to receive Your love, Your gifts and all the graces I need to walk in fidelity on the path of truth that leads to Your salvation. Mary, Mother of Salvation, teach me to pray like You. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus.