

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time: PERSISTENT PRAYER

Exodus 17:8-13; Responsorial Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2; Luke 18:1-8

Brothers and sisters, we are now on the 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time. Our three readings today lead us to reflect on the PERSISTENT PRAYER. Prayer is an act of faith. It is in prayer whereby we establish our relationship to our Loving and Merciful God called FAITH. When we pray, we recognize God in our life. When we pray, we open hearts to God. When we pray, we abandon and surrender our lives to God's mysterious ways.

Now, if we are going to ask a question – How often do we pray? Do we pray sometimes? Or Do we pray oftentimes? Or Do we pray all the times – meaning PERSISTENT PRAYER.

In reality of our life, we are only praying when we experience crisis in life. We are only praying when we are beset with hardships and difficulties. We are only praying when we encounter problems particularly when we can no longer bear the problems – It is here we call God in prayer. We call the EMERGENCY PRAYER!

Just like the story of the hunter and the Lion. The hunter is looking food (animals) in the forest, while the lion is also roaming around to look for food. When the hunter sees the lion he is so happy and he is excited to shoot and kill the lion at least he has already food for a week. On the other hand the lion is also extremely happy because he has also food to satisfy his hunger. So, the man points his gun towards the lion and started to shoot. But he could hit the lion because the lion was quick to move and run. While he keeps on shooting not knowing that the lion is already in front of him. He does not know what to do. He is already trembling because he knows that the lion is going to eat him. Without any delay he immediately prays calling on God to come to his rescue – This is the so called EMERGENCY PRAYER! While he was praying he noticed that the lion was kneeling down. He asked the lion, hey lion why are you kneeling down and the replied: “Keep quiet I am praying. The hunter was so happy and he said to himself this lion must be a CATHOLIC. He thanked God for responding his prayer. But wanted to know what kind of prayer the lion is uttering. He asked the lion, “hey lion what is you prayer? Immediately the lion responded: “PRAYER BEFORE MEALS.”

My dear brothers and sisters, we have to pray perseveringly as if we cannot live without praying. Just as Saint Padre Pio who once said: “Prayer is the oxygen of the soul.” Let us pray continuously to soften the heart of God because prayer is the KEY to the Heart of God.

In our First Reading, Moses set an example that prayer with perseverance through the lifting up of his arms Israelite would have the upper hands. But human as he was he would feel tired and so he has to put down his arms and hands that is a sign that they are being defeated by the Amelakites. Moses needs other people to lift his arms and hands again. This is the very reason why, Aaron and Hur assisted Moses and they won the war against their adversaries. There is no battle could win God. There is no war is won without prayer.

Our Gospel today also presents to us a widow's persistence of going to the corrupt judge asking to give justice in her favor. The corrupt judge rendered justice to the woman not because he feared God or respected any human beings but because the widow kept on pestering him.

According to the catechism book that prayer is the lifting up of mind and heart to God. However, in a simple and layman's term that “PRAYER IS A HEART TALK TO GOD.” PRAYER IS NOT EXPENSIVE. PRAYER IS NOT HARD. PRAYER IS NOT DIFFICULT. Anytime, anywhere we can pray. Even in an unholy hour or unholy place we can still pray. Just like St Teresa of Avila because of her desire to be in heaven she is always praying. Even inside the bathroom she is praying. And one day the devil taunted her for praying in a place not appropriate. So, St. Teresa a little bit irritated said to the devil, “What comes to my mouth is for God and what comes from behind is for you.”

Prayer is a heart to heart talk to God. Let us then pray persistently which is the key to the heart of God and the oxygen of the soul.