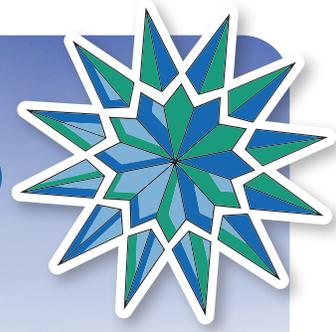


ALL SAINTS

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



Love God • Serve Others • Form Disciples

**October 18 & October 19, 2025;
29th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Father Eric's Homily

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

THE EFFICACY OF PERSISTENT PRAYERS

I would like to begin my reflection today with a story (joke):

One evening, six-year-old Bobby asked his father for a pet. "Sorry, son," his father said, "not now. But if you pray real hard for two months, perhaps God will send you a baby brother." Bobby prayed faithfully for a month, but it seemed futile to pray longer so he gave up. How surprised he was, when a month later, a little baby boy arrived at their home, or so Bobby thought when he saw a squirming bundle beside his mother. His proud father drew back the cover and Bobby saw another baby. Twins! "Aren't you glad you prayed for a baby brother?" asked his father. "I sure am," said the boy. "But aren't you glad I stopped praying when I did?"

In this story we realize that Bobby, at a point in time, stopped praying because he thought his prayers were not bearing any fruit. However, when he saw the twins, he realized that God's response had been beyond his expectation. That is why he told his father, "But aren't you glad I stopped praying when I did?" In his mind, the parents might have gotten triplets or quadruplets if he had kept on praying.

This story evokes the question, "how much more?". How much more should we continue to do something if we do not see the expected result? How much more should we pray when it appears God is indifferent to our prayers? How much more should we pray for God to answer our prayers? To the question "How much more?" the answer is PUSH: Pray Until Something Happens.

We must know that God is not indifferent to our prayers, neither is he inattentive to our prayers. St. Augustine tells us that, God delays, not to deny us, but to increase our capacity to receive." When we pray, especially when we pray constantly, our prayer bears its fruits. First of all, it helps us to conform our wills to God's will. It also helps us to get what we need and to be victorious.

In today's first reading, we read about the war between the Israelites and the Amalekites. Moses went to a top of a hill to pray for the Israelites as they fought. As long as Moses kept his hands raised in prayer, the Israelites were winning the war, but when he let his arms fall, the Amalekites had the better of the fight. When Moses' arm grew tired, Aaron and Hur, who had climbed the top of the hill with him, gave him a stone to sit on, while

they supported his hands, one on each side. With their support, Moses' arms remained firm till sunset which led to victory for Israel. This episode teaches us that to achieve goals beyond our strength, we must pray, and indeed pray persistently even when we are tired. If we lower our arms, that is, if we stop praying, we will be overpowered by the forces of evil but we if we keep on praying, we shall be victorious over the forces of evil. The presence of Aaron and Hur tells us that, at times, we need others to help us in our faith journey, especially when things do not go our way, when things become tough and we are tempted to give up. Ask others for help when you need it.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us a parable about the need to pray continually without becoming weary. The lesson of this parable is similar to the parable of the Friend at Midnight (cf. Luke 11:5-13). The two characters in this parable are a judge and a widow. The judge, we are told, neither feared God nor respected any human being. The widow is a symbol of all who are poor and defenseless. Without any resource, she had no hope of getting justice from an unjust judge. However, she had one weapon: persistence. With her persistence, the unjust judge finally granted her request.

This parable does not compare God to the unjust judge; it contrasts God to the judge. For Jesus, if such an unjust and reluctant judge could be bothered to give the widow justice, how much more will a loving God not attend to the needs of his children who make recourse to him?

This parable seeks to encourage us to pray. Just like the widow, we must keep on praying even when facing indifference or opposition. The key is to persist in our prayers even if God delays, with certain hope that God, who is a loving Father will eventually attend to our needs. St. Ambrose told St. Monica when the latter was constantly praying in tears for the conversion of his son, St. Augustine, that, "it is impossible that the son of many tears should perish". He also told Monica to speak less to Augustine about God and more to God about Augustine. This advice, we are told, encouraged a shift in her approach to prayer, from trying to persuade her son to surrendering her worries to God on his behalf. With tears and unwavering hope, Monica persistently prayed for 18 good years for the conversion of Augustine. What was the result? Augustine converted and ultimately became a Bishop. He is one the greatest intellectuals the Church has ever had. His teaching has influenced and still continue to influence the Church. He is now a saint. From a sinner to a saint. That is what persistent prayer can do.

We must note that, to persist in prayer does not mean engaging in endless repetition of prayers or painfully holding long prayer sessions. Rather, it means keeping our request constantly before God, hoping and believing that he will attend to our prayer. We must always PUSH: Pray Until Something Happens.

