

Saturday's Gospel: Persevering in Prayer

Gospel for Saturday in the 32nd Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 18:1-8*)

Jesus told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Vindicate me against my adversary.’ For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself,

‘Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.’”

And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

Commentary

The state of the society in which Jesus lived meant that a woman who had the misfortune of being a widow was left in a vulnerable situation. If we also take into account the indifference of the people responsible for administering justice,

the widow's helplessness is very apparent.

That is why the parable our Lord offers in today's Gospel is so powerful. A widow without any support on earth obtains justice with the only weapons at her disposal: her beseeching and her tenacity.

Faced with an injustice in our own life, we can sometimes feel helpless. We do all we can to fix the situation (talking to people, appealing to their conscience, seeking others' support), but nothing seems to change. We are like the widow in the Gospel parable. Our Lord encourages us to transform this feeling of helplessness into a greater eagerness to pray, to "pray always and not lose heart," trusting that we have a Father in Heaven who is concerned about our needs.

Sincere and insistent prayer always receives an answer. We have to abandon our cause in God's hands,

realizing that he will often provide a different solution than what we expected, but that it will be more effective.

In this regard, Pope Francis remarked: “We all go through times of tiredness and discouragement, especially when our prayers seem ineffective. But Jesus assures us: unlike the dishonest judge, God promptly answers his children, even though this doesn’t mean he will necessarily do so when and how we would like. Prayer does not work like a magic wand! It helps us keep faith in God, and to entrust ourselves to him even when we do not understand his will” (*General Audience*, 25 May 2016).

“Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” This question challenges us personally. Does our own prayer reflect the faith of someone who

knows their life is in the hands of a Father who wants what is best for his children?

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