



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 16, 2016

Seeing Our Faith Through

By Janel Esker

My mother claims her children inherited something from our father she calls “Eskerstick-to-itiveness.” I thought she’d made the whole word up, but stick-to-itiveness is actually in the dictionary. It means the ability to “stick” to something, see it through to completion. My father is much better than my mother at staying focused on a project through all its challenges, and my mother says it’s part of my DNA.

Today’s readings speak directly to

the concept of stick-to-itiveness. Moses must keep his hands raised to help the Israelites in battle; his friends Aaron and Hur stick by him in supporting his tired arms. Saint Paul encourages Timothy to “be persistent” in teaching and proclaiming the gospel “whether it’s convenient or inconvenient.” And the persistent widow in the Gospel who strikes fear in the heart of the unjust judge is upheld by Jesus as a model of faith and unceasing prayer. Stick-to-itiveness appears not only to be a helpful quality in project completion but also in discipleship. In the face of personal challenges, a consumerist culture, and simple human weakness, it can be tempting to give up on praying, give up on sharing the good news, give up on supporting others in their struggles. Today’s readings should give us that boost we need to persist: Jesus clearly states that God will answer and provide for his beloved ones in his good time—not in our time, but God’s.

Confident in this promise and in the stick-to-itiveness in our discipleship DNA, we also can persist in faith, prayer, and the sharing of God’s good news. †

“Be persistent in proclaiming the gospel—no matter how inconvenient it may be.”

A Word From Pope Francis

“I believe, Lord,” said the man who asked Jesus to heal his son: “I believe, Lord, help my meager faith.” We must therefore ask the Lord for the grace to pray with faith, so as to be sure that everything we ask of him will be given us, with the certainty that faith gives us. This is our victory: our faith.

—Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, January 14, 2016



Sunday Readings

Exodus 17:8–13

“As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight.”

2 Timothy 3:14—4:2

“Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.”

Luke 18:1–8

“Will not God...secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night?”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How persistent are you when it comes to your faith? Other things in your life?
- In what areas of your life would you like God to help you see things through?



A Model of Persistence

By Anne Wilson

Mother Teresa. The mere mention of her name evokes thoughts of praise, admiration, and—most likely—unattainable sanctity. Could any of us ever dream to reach her level of holiness? Honored internationally for her work with the poor, she has much to teach the rest of us who are struggling just to pay attention to this week’s homily. When we look back at her life and the inspirational lessons she left behind for all people, we discover one thing underlies them all: a firm persistence in faith.

Few people knew about the heavy burden Mother Teresa experienced during her

life, a “darkness of the soul”—a deep, empty spiritual separation from God that surfaced as soon as she began her famous work on the streets. She would quietly bear it for nearly fifty years.

While Mother carried her spiritual burden internally, she persisted in

faith, and her work flourished externally. Only a few months after her first visit to the streets, several of her former students joined her in mission work. In October 1950, her new Missionaries of Charity congregation was formally established. By the 1960s, her order, with its simple mission to care for the unwanted, had grown enough to be able to send sisters out from Calcutta to other parts of India.

The Missionaries of Charity expanded exponentially during the 1980s and ’90s; yet personally, Mother Teresa saw no growth in her spiritual life. In fact, she experienced nothing at all. She persisted

in prayer, love, and faith, relying on what she knew to be true from before.

“I want to speak [in prayer]—yet nothing comes—I find no words to express the depths of the darkness. In spite of it all—I am his little one—I love him...” she wrote in her journal. Her faith was so foundational that even a spiritual separation from God wouldn’t cause her to forsake her belief in the work to which she’d been called. Her dedication to serve those no one else wanted continued, as did her dedication to spreading her message of hope for the hopeless. Her homes throughout the world also provided for those suffering from AIDS, women in abusive relationships, and prostitutes.

As she entered her 80s, health problems plagued Mother Teresa, and her interior spiritual life remained its same empty hole. Yet she labored on. Until the end of her life on September 5 of 1997, Mother Teresa had exemplified to the entire world what dedication to prayer, love, and persistence in faith could accomplish. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, July 2016

The Persistent Widow

By Gary Zimak

One thing I like about the parable of the persistent widow is that Luke tells us exactly what it means. This removes the guesswork. According to Luke, this parable is about the “need to pray always and not to lose heart” (Luke 18:1). Pretty clear, isn’t it? God desires our goodness out of love for us, so if we pray for something harmful or sinful (even though we may not consider it so), we might be initially distressed at the will of the Father. But when we sincerely need something, we

are encouraged to keep praying for the Lord’s answer, which could be in the form of an affirming yes, a definite no, a gentle reminder to keep praying and wait, or simply a deep peace in the moment.

In this parable, the dishonest judge finally grants the widow’s request, not because he cares about doing the right thing, but because of her persistence. As with most of Jesus’ parables, we have to understand the point that Jesus is trying to make and be careful not to get hung up on the details. The Lord isn’t trying to compare our relationship with God to that of the woman and the evil judge but is instead trying to make the point that we should be persistent in prayer. †

←Source: *A Worrier’s Guide to the Bible*, © 2012 Liguori Publications



Lord, I am grateful that you listen to me. Make my whole life a prayer of thanksgiving in honor of your goodness and love.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 17–22

Mon. St. Ignatius of Antioch:
Ephesians 2:1–10 / Luke 12:13–21

Tue. St. Luke:
2 Timothy 4:10–17b / Luke 10:1–9

Wed. Sts. John de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues:
Ephesians 3:2–12 / Luke 12:39–48

Thu. Weekday:
Ephesians 3:14–21 / Luke 12:49–53

Fri. Weekday:
Ephesians 4:1–6 / Luke 12:54–59

Sat. Weekday:
Ephesians 4:7–16 / Luke 13:1–9