

Deacon Steve's Reflection on the 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time

October 20, 2019

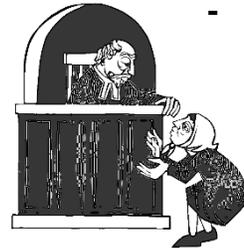
[Reading I: Exodus 17:8-13](#)

[Responsorial Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8](#)

[Reading II: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2](#)

[Gospel: Luke 18:1-8](#)

"Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."



There is an old saying: Stubbornness is a vice; perseverance is a virtue! So . . . what's the difference? Well, perhaps it is all in the point of view. Perseverance is usually used when someone pursues a noble objective. On the other hand, stubbornness is often used to describe when someone refuses to change even in the face of error or fault (or more likely, when someone disagrees with our own point of view).

The theme of this week's readings is perseverance, particularly in the contexts of prayer and discipleship. In the Gospel reading from Saint Luke, Jesus told his disciples to, *"pray always without growing weary,"* and shared the Parable of the Persistent Widow and the Unrighteous Judge. Seeking justice for her unnamed claim, the widow persisted with the judge until he finally rendered a favorable decision, not because he cared about justice or the wisdom herself, but because she was becoming an annoyance. Jesus told the disciples, that if someone, who is unrighteous, will respond to perseverance, how much more will God, who loves all, we respond to those who are persistent in prayer: *"Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you that he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"* The final verse implies that the Church itself will go through a time of trial and difficulty, testing the faith and perseverance of many believers – not unlike the Church today.

In the first reading from Exodus, Moses sent his men into battle, telling them that he will stand before them with his staff in his hand. As long as Moses raised his hands and held aloft his staff, Israel prevailed; if he lowered his hands to rest, then the enemy prevailed. To keep the figure of Moses with hands raised before the army, his associates placed a seat for him to sit, while they held his hands up. With his arms and staff raised, Israel defeated its adversary.

However, in addition to prayer, we must also be persistent in our discipleship as well. Saint Paul, in his Second Letter to Timothy said: *"Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching."* We too are called in this way: to boldly proclaim our faith and live out our lives as faithful disciples. As Christians, we are opposed by those in secular society, who answer to no one or nothing other than their own narcissistic desires. In the face of these assaults, we must persevere in prayer and in our discipleship, both individually and in community, so that we remain faithful to Our Lord Jesus Christ and his teachings.

Deacon Steve Szmuto