

29th Sunday of the Year C

*The Lord will guard you from evil,
he will guard your soul.
The Lord will guard your going and coming
both now and for ever. (Ps 120:7-8)*



First Reading

Exodus 17:8-13

The Amalekites came and attacked Israel at Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, "Pick out men for yourself, and tomorrow morning march out to engage Amalek. I, meanwhile, will stand on the hilltop, the staff of God in my hand." Joshua did as Moses told him and marched out to engage Amalek, while Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. As long as Moses kept his arms raised, Israel had the advantage; when he let his arms fall, the advantage went to Amalek. But Moses' arms grew heavy, so they took a stone and put it under him and on this he sat, Aaron and Hur supporting his arms, one on one side, one on the other; and his arms remained firm till sunset. With the edge of the sword Joshua cut down Amalek and his people.

Second Reading

2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:2

You must keep to what you have been taught and know to be true; remember who your teachers were, and how, ever since you were a child, you have known the holy scriptures – from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.

Before God and before Christ Jesus who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I put this duty to you, in the name of his Appearing and of his kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience – but do all with patience and with the intention of teaching.

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never lose heart. "There was a judge in a certain town" he said "who had neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the same town there was a widow who kept on coming to him and saying, 'I want justice from you against my enemy!' For a long time he refused, but at last he said to himself, 'Maybe I have neither fear of God nor respect for man, but since she keeps pestering me I must give this widow her just rights, or she will persist in coming and worry me to death.'" And the Lord said, "You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry to him day and night even when he delays to help them? I promise you, he will see justice done to them, and done speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"

Meditation

Jesus sets before us a parable sketched from life. A persistent widow importunes an uncooperative judge until she obtains satisfaction.

From this account, let us not conclude that the way to pray to God is to bore him to death or to drive him crazy. Only the Gentiles imagine that they will succeed in getting an answer by dint of words.

This gospel demonstrates in a remarkable way the danger of interpreting parables as allegory. In an allegory, every element has another dimension of meaning. A parable works as a whole to make a single point or to raise a disturbing question. In this parable it would be a mistake to equate God with the judge. It would be even more of a mistake to equate the woman's obstinate pleading with a superstitious attempt to pry an answer from God.

Jesus' parable is set under the heading of persevering prayer. It calls Christians to unceasing vigilance. Prayer is less an act which forces God's hand, but much more one which opens us to the always available gifts of God.