

## Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Two old friends met each other on the street one day. One looked forlorn, almost on the verge of tears. His friend asked, "What has the world done to you, my old friend?" The sad fellow said, "Let me tell you: three weeks ago, my uncle died and left me forty thousand dollars." "That's a lot of money." But you see, two weeks ago, a cousin I never even knew died, and left me eighty-five thousand dollars, free and clear." "Sounds to me that you've been very blessed."

"You don't understand!" he interrupted. "Last week my great-aunt passed away. I inherited almost a quarter of a million from her. "Now the man's friend was really confused. "Then, why do you look so glum?" "This week . . . no relative died!"

Dear Friends,

We all believe in God and pray to him everyday for our needs. Sometimes things happen right away. Sometimes they don't. We are frustrated when things don't happen in our way. Today's readings teach us to be persistent in our prayers and keep asking.

This last week the staff and volunteers attended a day of Encounter at the Green Bay Diocese. The presenter of the day was Fr. Dave Pivonka. In his address, he said, "what is my image of God?" Sometimes we think that God is like a divine ATM, where you get what you want.

Prayer is a tool that keeps our relationship growing. It doesn't need to always be formal prayers. It is a conversation that helps us build our relationship with our heavenly Father. In the first reading, Moses had the same situation. Having raised his hands up, becoming the tool for the people of Israel to feel the abiding presence of God. Moses, so close to God, still needs the support of others. We are learning a lesson here that we need our friends to support us in our needs. God has created that support system for us. Family, friends, church, and community are those support systems. Let us give a tough fight with the support of our system. God listens to all of us. This is how prayer becomes a relationship. So many emotions are involved here.

The second reading teaches us to be faithful to the Scriptures, which were inspired by God and proclaim the Word in many situations.

When Luke wrote this Gospel, the Parousia, or Second Coming of Jesus, had been delayed beyond what the early Church had expected. In addition, the Church was experiencing persecution from both the Jews and the Romans. The persecuted early Christians were finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their Faith. Hence, today's Gospel lesson

addresses the issues of Faith in difficult times. It reassures the Disciples that God is listening to their persistent prayers and will grant them justice.

In this parable, the widow had the powerful weapon which is persistence. Prayer is a battle of faith and the triumph of perseverance. (CCC #2573) This parable is not only about the efficacy of persistent prayer, but also about the character of God, His Trustworthiness and Justice; a type of Justice that reaches out to the poor and the weak, enabling them to fight against injustice. God's Justice goes far beyond human limits and can bring fullness of life to the poorest and the most vulnerable people in our world.

In Priests for the Third Millennium, Cardinal Timothy Dolan observes that prayer must become like eating and breathing. We have to eat daily, not stock up on food on Monday, and then take off the rest of the week. Do we take ten deep breaths and say, "Good, that's over for a while, I won't have to breathe for a couple of hours?"

As Jesus encourages the Disciples, he encourages us to be persistent and get the support of our family and friends. Basically, let us build our relationship. Let us strengthen our faith.