

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time



That's the unsettling question of the Gospel.
when the Son of Man comes,
will he find faith on the earth?»
Is our prayer a cry to God begging justice
for the poor of the world,
or have we substituted this for something else,
full of our own selves?
What resounds in our liturgy -
the clamor of those who suffer,
or our desire for a wellbeing
ever greater and more secure?

José Antonio PAGOLA

Reading 1 Exodus 17:8-13

In those days, Amalek came and waged war against Israel.
Moses, therefore, said to Joshua,
"Pick out certain men,
and tomorrow go out and engage Amalek in battle.
I will be standing on top of the hill
with the staff of God in my hand."
So Joshua did as Moses told him:
he engaged Amalek in battle
after Moses had climbed to the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur.
As long as Moses kept his hands raised up,
Israel had the better of the fight,
but when he let his hands rest,
Amalek had the better of the fight.
Moses' hands, however, grew tired;
so they put a rock in place for him to sit on.
Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands,
one on one side and one on the other,
so that his hands remained steady till sunset.
And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

R.(cf. 2) Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help come to me?
My help is from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

May he not suffer your foot to slip; may he slumber not who guards you:
indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps,
the guardian of Israel.

The LORD is your guardian; the LORD is your shade;
he is beside you at your right hand.
The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The LORD will guard you from all evil; he will guard your life.
The LORD will guard your coming and your going,
both now and forever.

Reading 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2

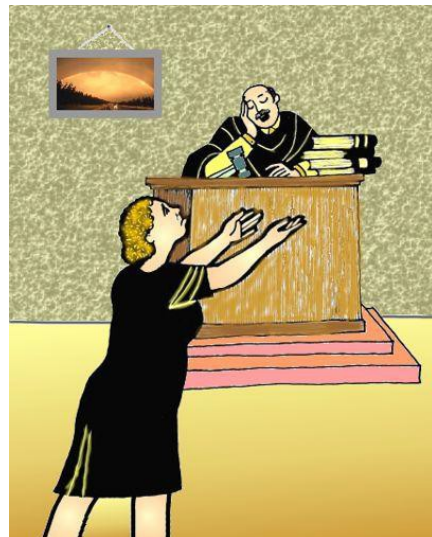
Beloved:

Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

Gospel Luke 18:1-8

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said, "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.' For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.'" The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. 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, 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?"



HOW LONG WILL THIS GO ON?

The parable is short and easily understood. Two characters who live in the same city occupy the scene. A «judge» who lacks two attitudes that are considered basic in Israel for any human being. «He doesn't fear God» and «he's not concerned about people». He is a man who is deaf to God's voice and indifferent to the suffering of the oppressed.

The «widow» is a woman on her own, deprived of a spouse to protect her and without any social support. In the biblical tradition, these «widows» are the symbol of defenseless people, along with orphans and foreigners.

The woman can't do anything but put pressure, approach over and over again to reclaim her rights, without resigning herself to the abuses of her «adversary». Her whole life becomes a cry: «Give me justice».

For a time, the judge doesn't react. He won't let himself be moved; he doesn't want to attend that constant cry. Afterwards he reflects and decides to act. Not out of compassion or out of justice. Simply to avoid the bother, and so that these things don't go on.

If such a niggardly and selfish judge ends up doing justice to this widow, God who is a compassionate Father, attentive to the most powerless, «won't he do justice for God's chosen ones who cry out to God, day and night?»

The parable encloses above all a message of confidence. The poor aren't abandoned to their lot. God isn't deaf to their cries. Hope is allowed. God's final intervention is secure. But isn't God being all too slow?

That's the unsettling question of the Gospel. We must trust; we must call on God unceasingly and without getting discouraged; we must «cry out to God» to do justice for those whom no one defends. But «when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?»

Is our prayer a cry to God begging justice for the poor of the world, or have we substituted this for something else, full of our own selves? What resounds in our liturgy – the clamor of those who suffer, or our desire for a wellbeing ever greater and more secure?

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