

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
OCTOBER 16, 2016

## ENCOUNTERING CHRIST'S WORD



### Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint 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?"

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### BACKGROUND ON THE GOSPEL READING

*Jesus urges his disciples to pray and not lose heart,  
for God hears and answers prayers.*

This is the first of two parables that Jesus tells in Luke 18 about prayer. (The second will be read at Mass next Sunday.) This first parable is a lesson in persistence in prayer. (Next Sunday's parable will address attitude in prayer.) While the parable seems to present prayer as nagging God for what we want, such a reading misses the point. God is not like the judge in the parable, worn down by requests and coerced to respond. The key is found in the description of the judge as corrupt and unjust. Since God can be neither, we must understand Jesus to be saying that if even an unjust judge responds to the persistence of the widow, how much more so will God listen to our prayers. God truly wants to hear our needs and respond generously. It is the final lament of Jesus that gets to the point of the parable. The lesson is about the persistence of the one who prays. *God wants us to be like the persistent widow, staying in relationship with God, confident that God hears and answers prayers.* Then Jesus laments, "Will such faith be found when the Son of Man comes?" In this lament, Jesus notes how easy it can be for us to lose heart.

### LASALLIAN VALUE IN ACTION

*Deepen Your Faith... Pray Always and Be Honest with God.  
From an honest prayer comes a greater intimacy with God.*

- Fr. Greg Friedman, OFM