

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, October 20, 2019

## The Power of Persistent Prayer

*Angie Windnagle*

**Exodus 17:8-13**

**2 Timothy 3:14—4:2**

**Luke 18:1-8**



Recently, my husband and I worked on getting a quote for rain gutters on our new home. Where we live, most homes just go without. However, after only a few short months of living here, we noticed that the little rain we get was slowly eroding the landscape in certain areas. It didn't seem like a big problem, and at first, I wasn't ready to shell out extra cash to fix it. But I realized the persistent rain, even when it was in small amounts, had the capability to drastically change our landscape in the years to come. While not the most exciting reason to spend money on a home, we understood the gift of foresight and the power of persistent rain creating divots in the ground surrounding our home.

In the readings this weekend, I wonder if we are being called to have that same foresight in understanding the power of persistence in prayer. In the first reading, we see a battle won due to the persistence of Moses. We often think of strength or brute force winning more primitive battles, and while that may play a part, we read that the ability to carry out the plan long term is what ultimately brought victory. They noticed one small gesture, hands raised, as the changing force of something big taking place before them. Staying faithful to keeping Moses' hands raised was the deciding factor in winning the battle.

When I read through the news and current events, it often seems that darkness has the upper hand. We seek to live a gospel of peace, and yet multiple times a year, we wake up to hear news of yet another mass shooting like the most recent one in Kansas. We are called to seek and save the lost like Christ came to do, and yet every day, there are reports of the poor and suffering being mistreated on our soil. How can we reconcile peace with so much darkness?

The readings this weekend show us that God's love and grace is the remedy to the darkness, and all He asks of us is persistence. The psalmist proclaims that "our help is from the Lord" not from political leaders or parties. He is our "guardian" and our "shade," protecting us from the worst evils we may wake up to each morning. What is more real than the darkness is God's providence. Many scholars have commented that evil isn't really a thing — it's simply the absence of good. In this sense, we see that even the worst evil that manifests our world has no claim on us if our hearts are set on God, who is all goodness. The only thing required of us is faith and persistence, relying solely on God.

In the Gospel, we hear of more persistence in the parable of the widow. This isn't just a metaphor for getting our way, but a radical call to never give up on prayer. It's easy to think that our small prayers to heaven aren't worth much when we don't see miraculous changes in the current social atmosphere. In reality, Jesus shows us that they are far more powerful than we could ever imagine. Much like the rain and our lack of gutters. Left alone, not only would the rain change the landscape, it would have also greatly impacted the foundation, creating a cascade of issues.

By staying faithful to prayer and to conversation and relationship with our loving Father, over time we will slowly erode our society in a positive way into one filled with truth, goodness, and beauty, creating a cascade of hope. In one of his homilies, St. John Paul II once said, "As the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live." Persistence in prayer and faith quite literally has the power to change the world we live in.

Persistence takes patience, however. It isn't something that always comes easy, as Moses learned in the Old Testament. Help is often needed. In the second reading, we are given the tools to remain constant spiritually. St. Paul reminds us of the power of Scripture and Tradition, the Deposit of Faith handed down to us. We have the strength and wisdom of the Church to guide us into truth and help us remain persistent in faith. The persistence will slowly yet surely wear away the culture of darkness, transforming it into a culture of light and life.

## PRAYER

O Prince of Peace,  
to all who receive You,  
You bright light and peace.  
Help me to live in daily contact with You,  
listening to the words  
You have spoken and obeying them.  
O Divine Child,  
I place my hands in Yours;  
I shall follow You.  
Oh, let Your divine life flow into me.  
Amen.  
— *St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*

Let us commit then to be like the widow or the rain, continually raising our hearts to God in prayer without ceasing. It may not seem like much on the surface, but over time and in eternity, we will see the fruit of this constant contact with God and the battles won. With the power of God's word and protection, goodness will always triumph if we remain persistent in the fight.

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