

29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C

(Exodus 17:8-13; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2; Luke 18:1-8)

Excerpts from World Mission Sunday - 19 Oct 2025

by Father Charles Fillion

19 October 2025

Brothers and sisters, today's readings speak of the importance and power of prayer, and give two examples. The first reading tells us that through the power of prayer we can win our battles and triumph over our enemies. The Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land. However, they had to pass through the territory of Amalek, a nomadic tribe that lived in the Sinai desert. Tired from the journey, the People of God asked for water, but instead of helping them, the Amalekites attacked and killed the weakest who were at the back of the caravan.

Today's first reading refers to one of the first confrontations with this tribe. Moses ordered Joshua to attack them while he, along with Aaron and Hur, went up on the mountain to ask God for help. It happened that while Moses had his arms raised in prayer, Joshua prevailed in the battle, but when he lowered them because of fatigue, the Amalekites prevailed. To keep Moses' arms raised in prayer, Aaron and Hur told him to sit on a stone, and they, one on the right and the other on the left, kept his arms raised. They stayed like this until evening, and Israel defeated the Amalekites.

It is clear that the victory over Amalek was not due to Joshua's sword but to Moses' prayer. The biblical passage is obviously not an invitation to ask God for strength to kill enemies, but to face and win the spiritual battles we face as believers. The message it teaches us is that those who want to achieve goals beyond their strength must pray without ceasing. There are results that can only be achieved through prayer. The enemies we are called to confront are ambition, hatred, and disordered passions. Without prayer, these enemies will win over us. Moses, with his arms raised, is the symbol of the believer who is aware of the need to invoke the power of God through prayer, knowing that "our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth" (Responsorial Psalm).

Today's Gospel speaks about the need to always pray without losing heart. It is said that through prayer, justice is done. The judge's duty was to protect the weak and defenseless, not to be someone without feelings or compassion. The widow, the symbol of a defenseless person, is vulnerable to abuse. The widow had suffered an injustice and had no means of defending her cause other than repeatedly and persistently pestering the judge. The judge ends up helping her, not because his heart has become more sensitive, but because he does not want to be bothered. With this parable, Jesus wants to present the situation of the disciples in this world still dominated by evil and deeply marked by death.

What should we do in these situations? The parable says: pray always, without ceasing.

Prayer is the best way to keep our heads in the most difficult and dramatic moments, when we see no way out of situations, when everything seems to be against us. In prayer, we discern what to do. As we pray, we are led to commit ourselves to social transformation and to do our part in building the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of justice. We should pray not so much that God will do what we ask of him now, but that our faith will not be extinguished and that Jesus' last question, "But when the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on the earth?" will have a positive answer.

Prayer is the guide and strength of mission. For this day of prayer, Pope Francis wrote a message entitled "Missionaries of Hope Among all Peoples" which "reminds individual Christian and the entire Church, the community of the baptized, of the fundamental vocation to be, in the footsteps of Christ, messengers and builders of hope." Pope Francis recalled how in his earthly life, Jesus, "the divine Missionary of hope ... went about doing good and healing all' from evil and the Evil One, restoring hope in God to the needy and the people."

He urges us to be inspired to set out "in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus to become, with him and in him, signs and messengers of hope for all, in every place and circumstance that God has granted us to live." The Holy Father insists on the necessity and urgency of continuing Jesus' "ministry of hope for humanity." "Faced with the urgency of the mission of hope today, Christ's disciples are called first to discover how to become 'artisans' of hope and restorers of an often distracted and unhappy humanity." Hope is born, nourished and renewed in prayer. The mission of hope is only possible in prayer, "especially prayer based on the word of God.

After nourishing ourselves, the Word of God must be used to nourish others. This is why Saint Paul tells Timothy: "Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching". For the Word not only transmits knowledge but has the power to give "wisdom that leads to salvation." Let us not forget, then, to nourish ourselves with the Word of God, the great source of wisdom, self-knowledge and hope, and to pray for the missionary work of the Church throughout the world. Through our prayers, let us be missionaries from the very beginning.