

Homily 29th Sunday, Year C

One of the spiritual exercises we did during our recent 9 days Novena to St Francis of Assisi was to write on paper some of our prayer petitions and we prayed over them each day of the Novena. On the last day of the Novena, the prayer petitions were burnt amidst prayers and hymns. The prayer petitions were sent to God by fire! I still remember part of my spontaneous prayer over the petitions: “Lord God, your children wrote the prayer petitions in faith because you are a faithful God. We wrote the prayer petitions in hope because your Word says that hope does not disappoint. If we human beings receive replies from one another when we write letters, send emails, sent texts, make phone calls; how much more will you, our heavenly Father, reply our prayer petitions ...” This prayer re-echoed in my mind while I reflected over the Gospel of today. If the judge granted the request of the widow, how much more will God grant us our prayers. Jesus says, “Will not God, then, secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night?” Jesus further assures us, “I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily.”

In the first reading, while Israel fought Amalek (physical battle), Moses went up the hill and stood in prayer (spiritual battle). “As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had better of the fight. But when Moses let his hands rest, Amalek had better of the fight.” At some point, Moses was tired from standing, and his hands grew tired too. Aaron and Hur placed a rock for Moses to sit on, and Aaron and Hur stood by Moses sides and supported his hands, and the hands remained raised and remained steady until Israel won the battle. This teaches us that our engagements (physical battle) must be backed up with prayers (spiritual warfare). The first reading makes us to understand that if we engage in physical warfare, not backed by spiritual warfare, victory will be absolutely difficult.

When Moses grew tired and his hands were weak he did not give up. First he sat down, and second Aaron and Hur supported him. Therefore, Moses teaches us not to give up praying. Keep your prayers going kneeling, sitting, standing, prostrating, walking and so on. There are varieties of position and method of prayer. Also, the support of one another is very important in our journey of faith. Sometimes, we may be weak in faith or in prayer. At those times we rely on our prayers partners, our prayer group, and our prayer community. Therefore, it is very helpful to pray with one another and for one another. Just as Aaron and Hur supported Moses, that is how we need the prayerful support of one another.

Finally, Moses remained steady in prayer until Israel won the battle. The widow kept going to the judge until justice was granted to her. We are, therefore, encouraged to remain steady in prayer because God is faithful, and does not disappoint (1 Cor 1:9).

Fr. Martin Eke, MSP