

Alleluia, alleluia!

The word of God is living and active;
it probes the thoughts and motives of our
heart.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 18:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according
to Luke.

God will see those who cry to him vindicated.

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the need
to pray continually and never lose heart. ‘There
was a judge in a certain town’ he said ‘who had
neither fear of God nor respect for man. In the
same town there was a widow who kept on
coming to him and saying, “I want justice from
you against my enemy!” For a long time he
refused, but at last he said to himself, “Maybe
I have neither fear of God nor respect for man,
but since she keeps pestering me I must give
this widow her just rights, or she will persist in
coming and worry me to death.”’

And the Lord said, ‘You notice what the unjust
judge has to say? Now will not God see justice
done to his chosen who cry to him day and night
even when he delays to help them? I promise
you, he will see justice done to them, and done
speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will
he find any faith on earth?’

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Reflections on the Gospel

THE PERSISTENT CRY FOR JUSTICE

The parable in the Gospel for today commends
praying to God with the kind of persistence
shown by the widow in her dealings with
the unjust judge. It does not mean that God,
unwilling to respond, needs to be worn down
like the judge. Rather, it commends an attitude
of trust in God that motivates persistence in
prayer, even when an answer may seem a long
time coming.

In Jesus’ society, widows were dependent
on the sound working of the justice system
since they lacked the support of a husband
and possibly that of adult sons. Hence the
plight of this woman, whose entreaties the
judge so long ignores. As Jesus tells the story,
the judge stirs himself on her behalf only
when he suspects that she is going to become
physically violent. Translated literally, what
the judge says is ‘... lest she come and give
me a black eye’ (the Greek expression actually
comes from the boxing arena).

The force of the parable flows from a kind of
contrasting logic. If the unjust judge moves at
long last to grant justice to the widow, albeit
through base and self-serving motives, how
much more readily and certainly will the God
of all goodness move to grant justice to those
who make appeal day and night?

In a world where the poor, like the widow,
cry out for justice, the challenge of the parable
is sharp. Those whose actions or inertia allow
many to suffer must reckon with a God firmly
aligned with the cause of the poor.

Brendan Byrne, SJ



TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

20 OCTOBER 2019

FIRST READING

Ex 17:8-13

A reading from the book of Exodus

*As long as Moses kept his arms raised, Israel had
the advantage.*

The Amalekites came and attacked Israel at
Rephidim. Moses said to Joshua, ‘Pick out men
for yourself, and tomorrow morning march out
to engage Amalek. I, meanwhile, will stand on
the hilltop, the staff of God in my hand.’ Joshua
did as Moses told him and marched out to
engage Amalek, while Moses and Aaron and Hur
went up to the top of the hill. As long as Moses
kept his arms raised, Israel had the advantage;
when he let his arms fall, the advantage went to
Amalek. But Moses’ arms grew heavy, so they
took a stone and put it one on one side, one
on the other; and his arms remained firm till
sunset. With the edge of the sword Joshua cut
down Amalek and his people.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 120. R. cf. v. 2

**R. Our help is from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

1. I lift up my eyes to the mountains: / from
where shall come my help? / My help shall
come from the Lord / who made heaven and
earth. **R.**
2. May he never allow you to stumble! / Let
him sleep not, your guard. / No, he sleeps not
nor slumbers, / Israel’s guard. **R.**
3. The Lord is your guard and your shade; /
at your right side he stands. / By day the sun
shall not smite you / nor the moon in the
night. **R.**
4. The Lord will guard you from evil, / he will
guard your soul. / The Lord will guard your
going and coming / both now and for ever. **R.**



SECOND READING

2 Tim 3:14–4:2

A reading from the second letter of St Paul
to Timothy

*This is how the people of God become equipped and
ready for every good work.*

You must keep to what you have been taught
and know to be true; remember who your
teachers were, and how, ever since you were
a child, you have known the holy scriptures –
from these you can learn the wisdom that leads
to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All
scripture is inspired by God and can profitably
be used for teaching, for refuting error, for
guiding people’s lives and teaching them to be
holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to
God becomes fully equipped and ready for any
good work.

Before God and before Christ Jesus who is
to be judge of the living and the dead, I put
this duty to you, in the name of his Appearing
and of his kingdom: proclaim the message and,
welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute
falsehood, correct error, call to obedience – but
do all with patience and with the intention of
teaching.

■ The word of the Lord.