Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 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?"

"Pray always without becoming weary"

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Today, Jesus reminds us about the necessity "to pray always without becoming weary" (Lk 18:1). He teaches with His deeds and with His words. St. Luke appears before us as the evangelist of Jesus' prayers. Quite so! In some of the scenes, where the authors inspired in the Holy Scriptures depict Jesus' life, only Luke presents Him in the act of praying.

The Lord is a model of the petition prayer. During Jesus' Baptism in the river Jordan, when choosing the Twelve and at the Transfiguration. When a disciple asks Him "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk 11:1) and from His lips comes out the Lord's Prayer. When He announces His negations to Peter: "I have prayed that your own faith may not fail" (Lk 22:32). At the crucifixion: "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do'" (Lk 23:34). When He dies in the Cross: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46). After the description of all evangelists, the same Lord is a model of the petition prayer, especially at the Gethsemane garden.

—I could point out how I will raise my heart towards God during different activities, because intellectual

work and manual labor are not the same; being in church or in a sports field or at home; driving in a city or on a turnpike; there is a difference between petition and gratitude prayers: between adoration and pleading forgiveness; early in the morning, late, after a whole day's work. St. Josemaría Escrivá gives us a recipe for the petition prayer: "More is achieved by whoever goes up closer to plead… That is why you must get close to God and be intent on becoming a saint."

The Virgin Mary is a model of prayer, also of petition prayer. At Cana of Galilee she was able to advance Jesus' timing, the time of the miracles, with her petition, full of love for those newly weds and full of trust in her Son.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Do what you can, and what you can't, ask God!" (San Augustine)

- "Prayer changes our hearts, it makes us understand better who our God truly is. However, it is important not to speak to God with empty words." (Francis)

- "Jacob wrestles all night with a mysterious figure who refuses to reveal his name, but he blesses him before leaving him at dawn. From this account, the spiritual tradition of the Church has retained the symbol of prayer as a battle of faith and as the triumph of perseverance" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2573)