

29th Sunday in the Ordinary Time C
Pray Always Without Becoming Weary

Exodus 17:8-13; Psalm 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2; Luke 18:1-8

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our gospel begins with "Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary" (Lk. 18:1). Why is it necessary for the disciples of Jesus to pray always without becoming weary?

Prayer is not just a routine, but the very language of our relationship with God. A soul without prayer is like a body without senses, impaired and unable to fully experience the divine grace and blessings that God offers. But when we engage in prayer, our souls are transformed, strengthened, and able to rise to the heights of heaven.

The importance of praying persistently without becoming weary is hinted at in the responsorial psalm: "Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). It is a reminder that our lives depend on the strength of God, who is both the source and purpose of all life. There are particular challenges in life that we cannot overcome on our own; often, we need strength from above to face these battles and thrive with God's grace.

Moses illustrates a powerful lesson during the conflict with Israel's enemies. When he raised his hands in prayer, the Israelite troops were able to advance more effectively in battle. Conversely, when he lowered his hands, the troops began to weaken. To support him, Aaron and Hur helped keep Moses' hands raised in prayer, leading their armies to victory over Amalek and his forces (cf. Ex. 17:11). This shows that prayer is our source of strength. It acts like a charger that replenishes and renews our energy. By raising our hands in prayer, we do not rely on our own strength to overcome challenges; instead, we surrender to God. When we surrender, it is not that we do nothing, but we beg God to accompany our efforts and give us strength to persevere.

Praying persistently without becoming weary is similar to the persistent widow who never gave up before an unjust judge. We have to remember that widows during the time of Jesus were virtually nothing and had no rights after the death of their husbands. This poor widow was not only persistent but also desperate, calling the unjust judge to rule in her favor. To drive home the main point of the parable, our Lord Jesus tells us that if that cruel judge finally gave in to the appeal of the widow because of her sheer determination, how much more will the heavenly Father readily answer the incessant prayers of his children?"

When was the last time you desperately prayed and felt like heaven was closed? Being desperate and persistent in prayer brings us closer to God. It connects us with our true selves and with God on a deeper level than the superficiality we often experience. Jesus teaches us that we cannot approach prayer in a shallow manner. We need to engage in heartfelt dialogue, not mere words.

To pray always without becoming weary means to truly desire God, to yearn for Him with all our heart and soul. God wishes to fulfill the deepest longings of our hearts, such as love, peace, contentment, joy, and other holy gifts, and the greatest gift of all is Jesus: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also give us everything else along with Him?" (Rom. 8:32). This is God's self-giving, which is the fulfillment of all fulfillments of our desire.

How can we succeed in praying continually without becoming weary?

We can find the answer in the example set by our Lord Jesus. He prayed throughout the day, in the evening, early in the morning, and even in deserted places. At times, he spent the entire night in prayer in specific locations (cf. Mt. 14:21; Mk. 6:46; Lk. 6:12). Prayer was the constant thread of his life; it sustained him, strengthened him, and nourished his union with the will of the Father. Throughout the life of our Lord Jesus, it is clear that setting aside specific times and places for prayer is essential.

We deceive ourselves if we think we can consistently make prayer a natural part of our daily lives without dedicating special time and a particular place for it.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church articulates this beautifully, stating that prayer awakens the memory of the heart and is the essence of a renewed spirit. It should inspire and guide us in every moment. However, we often forget God, who is our life and everything to us. We need to remember Him more frequently than we take our next breath. We cannot truly pray "at all times" unless we also pray at specific moments, consciously choosing to do so (cf. CCC #2697). To pray continually without becoming weary, as our Lord Jesus did, we must set aside specific times and places for prayer.

The greatest prayer, prayer of all prayers, the thanksgiving of all thanksgivings, is the Holy Mass, celebrated at a particular time and in a specific place. What we celebrate is the victory of our Lord Jesus – his passion, death, and resurrection. It is the victory of heaven! Because of this victory, we are saved and thrive as beloved children of God! Christians cannot live without the Sunday Holy Mass.

Imagine being a loyal supporter of a team, whether it's football, basketball, or baseball. You attend their games faithfully, and after a hard-fought victory, you stay for hours, yet you don't even get a chance to touch the trophy. Only losers go home early. Now, think about how much more meaningful the Holy Mass is—it's a celebration of Jesus' victory. You belong to the winning team of heaven! Please don't leave early but wait for the dismissal rite when you are sent to go and proclaim the Goodnews, the victory of Jesus!

Our prayer is not just a routine; it is important for nurturing our relationship with the victorious and almighty God, who sustains every aspect of our lives. When we pray without becoming weary, not losing heart, leads us in communion with God and makes his presence to take hold of us, consequently, gracing us with the privilege to reach the heights of heaven and to fully experience the surprising blessings He offers. It is the gift of his presence that helps us see hope in our darkness and thrive even in worst adversity. It awakens a profound desire to embrace charity and inspires us to action to save others from their adversities.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to help us pray without getting weary:

Holy Mary, Help of Christians, we, your children, entrust to you our desire to pray always without losing heart.
We ask for your maternal intercession to help fulfill this desire. Amen.

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

Fr. Manny Hewe, Pastor