

How Long Must I Pray?

A Gospel Reflection from Brian Wigger

Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States of America, once said: *'Courage is not having the strength to go on; it is going on when you don't have the strength'*. Such a saying on the lips of someone like Roosevelt can sound quite trite but let us not forget that Roosevelt was no stranger to challenges or difficulties in both his personal and public life. Would he have achieved all he did without the gift or virtue of perseverance? We may never know, but somehow, I do not think so.

The readings this weekend offers us a profound meditation on the power of perseverance—in prayer, in faith, and in our mission as disciples. We are reminded that the journey of faith is not always easy, but it is always worth it.

This weekend, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells a parable that ties it all together: the story of the persistent widow. She is a woman without power or influence, yet she refuses to give up. Day after day, she comes to the unjust judge, demanding justice. Eventually, the judge relents, not because he is righteous, but because he is worn down by her persistence.

Jesus uses this parable to teach us about the necessity of prayer. 'Pray always,' Jesus says, 'and do not lose heart.' If even an unjust judge can be moved by persistence, how much more will our loving God respond to God's own who cry out in need?

But Jesus ends with a question that pierces the heart: 'But when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?' This is not just a rhetorical question; it is a challenge. Will we be found faithful? Will we continue to pray, to believe, to hope, even when answers seem delayed?

The widow's persistence is not just stubbornness; it is faith in action. She believes that justice is possible, and she refuses to be silenced. Her example calls us to a prayer life that is not passive, but active; not occasional, but constant.

All of the Scripture readings this weekend teach us that prayer is powerful, not because it changes God, but because it changes us. They teach us that Scripture is essential, not just for knowledge, but for transformation. And they teach us that faith is a journey, one that requires perseverance, community, and trust.

Let us then be people of persistent prayer, faithful witness, and unshakable hope. Let us lift one another up, as Aaron and Hur did. Let us proclaim the Word, as Paul urged. And let us pray without ceasing, as Jesus taught.

And when the Son of Man comes, may He find in all of us a faith that has endured.