

14. November 2020

“To pray constantly”

Lk 18:1-8

Then he told them 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 anyone. In the same town there was also 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, "Even though I have neither fear of God nor respect for any human person, I must give this widow her just rights since she keeps pestering me, or she will come and slap me in the face."' And the Lord said, 'You notice what the unjust judge has to say? Now, will not God see justice done to his elect if they keep calling to him day and night even though he still 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?'

What a strong call comes to us here in the parable of the widow, who presses the judge until he answers to her request. This is a divine invitation never to give up persevering prayer and to knock on God's door again and again, even if it seems that prayer is not answered. If it is a prayer that pleases the Lord, it will always be answered. However, it may not correspond to the time we expect. But this is not a delay, not because God would be unwilling - as the judge mentioned in today's text - to fulfil our legitimate request, but because the Lord knows exactly when it makes sense to answer the prayer. This is easy to understand when dealing with children. They have a justified desire which one would like to fulfil for them. But the circumstances do not yet fit together and the immediate fulfilment of the wish would even possibly have a negative effect on them. Therefore, although you hear the wish, you carry it in your heart, but you wait until the right time has come to fulfil it!

An example of how an obviously justified request was not immediately fulfilled by God, but was, so to speak, kept in his memory, can be found in the Apocalypse of St. John (*Rev 6:9-11*):

“When he broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of all the people who had been killed on account of the Word of God, for witnessing to it. They shouted in a loud voice, 'Holy, true Master, how much longer will you wait before

you pass sentence and take vengeance for our death on the inhabitants of the earth?' Each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to be patient a little longer, until the roll was completed of their fellow-servants and brothers who were still to be killed as they had been."

Today, at the end of the text, the Lord asks a question that obviously hurts him and should actually hurt us too! *"But when the Son of man comes, will he find any faith on earth?"*

If we answer this question at this point in time, we would have to complain: faith has often become weak! In not a few countries of the world, which know the message of the Gospel, it has even evaporated. We must slowly speak of an apostasy. Generations are growing up who are no longer taught the message of faith as a matter of course. The importance of the Church declining in many countries. The church, which was once a rock for friends and enemies, seems to be gnawed on by the spirit of the times and hardly radiates the security it once gave its believers!

So what could we answer our Lord?

Perhaps like this: "Lord, there are still believers. Admittedly, there should be many more, they should await You with longing and serve with zeal in Your vineyard, Lord. What should we do? Give us such a strong faith, much greater than now, that at least those who believe will be completely filled with it. Perhaps then others will be touched by it!"

In the Father's booklet of Madre Eugenia, in a passage with the words of the Father, it says:

"If at this very moment (1932) I wish for something, a growing fervor in the zeal of the righteous. This would bring about a true and lasting conversion of sinners, as well as the return of the "Prodigal Sons" to the Father's house. This is especially true for the Jews, as well as for all the others who are also my creatures and children: those separated from the Church or apostate from the faith, the Freemasons, the unfortunate unbelievers, the godless, the blasphemers and various sects and secret societies..."

The best thing is to pray for a strong faith and that many other people will also find their way to God.

Such a prayer will surely please You, Lord, and You will not hesitate to fulfil it!