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Raise Up Your Hands and Put Them to Work: A Call to Persevering for Justice and Lasting Practical Change

An Interfaith Prayer Breakfast Homily for Sunday, October 19, 2025

(Readings: Exodus 17:8-13 | Psalm 121 | 2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:2 | Luke 18:1-8)

Good morning, my friends.

Let us pause, together, in the divinity of this sacred moment we now share —
and contemplate how we might best work together as we Raise Up Our Hands and Put Them to Work according to our Call to Persevere for Justice and Bring about Lasting Practical Change, because we help mercy abound as much as is humanly possible.

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Let us consider:

I. The Struggle We See — and the Promise We Hear

It is a grace to gather here among you — people of many faithful paths and many fervent prayers — bound by one conviction: that the world is aching for justice, and that our joined voices can help tip its axis toward mercy.

In recent weeks the headlines have been heavy: rising displacement, political fracture, ecological grief. The noise of conflict drowning out the quiet of compassion. And yet, into this swirl, today's readings speak with astonishing precision.

In Exodus 17, Moses stands on a hilltop while a battle rages below. As long as his hands are raised, his people prevail; when they falter, the tide turns. So Aaron and Hur stand beside him, holding up his weary arms. It is a portrait of perseverance sustained in community.

The Psalmist sings, "Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Not a promise of ease, but of constancy.

Saint Paul, in his letter to Timothy, writes: "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with complete patience and teaching." The charge is uncompromising: do not wait for perfect circumstances before speaking truth. And certainly do not wait for perfect circumstances before taking action. Never let perfection become the enemy of the good enough for now — for now is really all we ever have.

And Jesus, in Luke 18, tells of the persistent widow, who refuses to stop pleading with an unjust judge until justice is done. Her insistence becomes her power; her voice, her victory.

Across these texts runs one golden thread: perseverance in prayer, steadiness in justice, and the refusal to let weariness silence our compassion.

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Let us understand:

II. Why Persistence Matters (Especially Now)

Why must we keep at it, even when the news cycle numbs us?

1. Because justice, like faith, cannot be intermittent.

Systems of oppression rarely yield to polite, occasional demands. They bend only under sustained moral pressure.

2. Because witness rekindles hope.

Every steady voice reminds the world that goodness is still possible, that someone still cares.

3. Because God's vindication is sure, though His timing is often mysterious.

Our persistence partners with a divine momentum already at work. In effect, our effort is not futile: we are participating in a long arc of justice that God is already molding, already bending toward the telos of that great cry — "Free at last, free at last" — and thank God Almighty He has chosen us to be His fellow workers in this most glorious task.

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Let us be made awake, and aware of:

III. How We Can Persevere Together

Because this is an interfaith gathering, let me name some practical rhythms that people of all faith traditions — especially those among us who find their hope not in some deus ex machina, but in the simple, transcendent helpfulness of the beating human heart — can embrace together as the persistent seekers of peace we are.

1. The sacred solidarity of accompaniment.

No one wins a battle of justice alone. If you're a Moses, be the Moses, but if you're not, be sure to be an Aaron and a Hur for someone whose hands are tired, especially if that someone is struggling through the battle on the field below. Hold them up — keep them praying, working, and healing.

2. The ritual of persistence.

Let prayer, meditation, and acts of compassion become rhythm, not reaction. Structure endurance into your daily life, both at home, and in the communal work you do.

3. The power of truth at every turn.

Paul's charge — to preach "in season and out of season" — extends beyond pulpit into the workplace, education, social media, and all the corners of our civic life. When injustice surfaces — in housing, policing, or policy — we cannot be silent. We MUST speak, because our shared dignity DEMANDS it.

4. The rest of renewal.

Perseverance is not about burnout. Moses' arms grew heavy; the people halted. We too will tire. That's why we must ground ourselves in the deeper rest of purposeful community — in communal worship, shared contemplative practices, and the conviction that our cause rests ultimately in God's hands, magnified through the hands of those who gather round us to hold ours up, even in our weariness.

Indeed, our cause rests not in our hands, and our hands alone — but in the hands of all who labor with love together with us, in everything we do. Because, as the story of creation in Genesis reminds us, none of us is made to walk alone, and it is NOT GOOD that we should ever try to labor ALONE — at anything, at all.

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Let us share, together:

IV. A Word of Hope from Dilexi Te

Recently, Pope Leo XIV's first apostolic exhortation, Dilexi Te ("I Have Loved You"), called for a renewed love of the poor as the measure of any civilization's soul. That message resonates far beyond Christian ears: it is a call to dignify those whom systems discard, to make justice not a mere charity but a shared, strategic covenant for righteous action. In our interfaith posture, we can take Dilexi Te as a reminder: no authentic justice is possible without the poor's voice being central to our purpose; no lasting peace can be hoped to be found without the flourishing of the poor.

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And let us ask ourselves the question:

V. Will Jesus Find Faith on Earth When He Returns?

Jesus ends His parable with the haunting question: "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?"

That question rests with us.

And you, in this room, represent a myriad of potential answers.

Let each of us be persistent widows — and helpful friends — lifting hands, praying on, making noise, and refusing to close our mouths, or rest our hands, until justice rolls down "like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

That's a voice many across our faith traditions recognize as powerfully sacred to us as it echoes across the eons from Amos 5:24.

With this as our rally call, let us march into the days ahead:
Lifting vigil hands in prayer
Raising prophetic voices in public
Walking with the poor to bring them dignity
Taking turns holding one another up

And for goodness' sake:

Keep digging in, doing the work, and fighting the battle of social justice on the field below, in the trenches — alongside those in need — where the rubber meets the road, so that we can achieve the real, helpful, and lasting outcomes of peace we ALL long for — for ourselves, for our posterity, and for our neighbors who deserve to be "the least of these" NO MORE!

Let us place our trust in the God who never slumbers, believing that He will answer in the fullness of time — vindicating not the proud and the powerful, but those who are afflicted, and the faithful who rally to their aid.

May this be the faith that Jesus finds in us on this Earth on the day of His return.

May our day of vindication come.

And may that day be TODAY — in this prophetic now, addressed to this Divine Now, this always-accepted time, this always-accepted day of salvation, simply because we care enough to pause in the divinity of this sacred moment and help mercy abound as much as we humanly can.

May we all be the change we want to see in the world… May we Help Mercy Abound as we Scramble-4-Peace… today!

Amen.