**“Pray Always”**

All our three readings inspire us to ***pray to God without ceasing***. Praying is our way of communicating with God. It is through the highest form of prayer that we worship God. Prayer is one of the ways for us to express our love for God. It is a way of thanking Him for all His gifts such as love, mercy, and kindness.

In our first reading, we are introduced to a battle between Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Hur and the Israelites on one side, and Amalek and his army on the other side. In the battle, we are introduced to the prayer of intercession by Moses on the top of a hill.

Moses’ prayer was a non vocal prayer; in that Moses did not have to say a word. Instead, Moses had to suffer by holding his hands up in the air. As long as Moses was able to do so, the Israelites were wining in the battle. But when Moses got tired and let his hands come down, the Amalek and his army were wining.

By the Israelites winning the war in the end, this tells us that we should never stop interceding for whoever we are praying for until our prayer is answered. God always answer our prayers in His time and according to His divine wisdom. So, we should give thanks to God no matter the outcome of our prayer.

On a lower scale, what Moses did on the mountain by raising his hand resulting in a victory for the Israelites could be compared what Christ did by being raised with His arms outstretched on the cross for all. Moses’ suffering also on a smaller scale, could be compared to Christ’s suffering on the cross. However, Moses did not suffer persecution or shed his blood. We can say, Moses’ action and suffering, prefigures the passion of Christ who interceded for all of us.

In our second reading, Paul reminds us that it is by praying that we would remain faithful to what we have learned and believe. By first praying before reading Scriptures, we would have an open mind to dialogue with God. Prayers leads us to holiness because we would have no time for sinfulness such as idle talk.

It is by being prayerful and reading the Scriptures that we would put on the armor of Christ so we would be equipped with all the graces that comes from God to do good works. When we are equipped with God’s graces, we would be able to discern God’s will and submit ourselves to all that God permit to happen to us, whether they are convenient or inconvenient.

In our Gospel reading, Jesus told us to pray always. In the story of the dishonest judge, Jesus used it to let us know that forming a habit of praying with our whole heart all the time is the single most important preparation we can make for His second coming. It is through prayers that we will get the grace to see and discern the will of God. And that is when we will fully surrender our lives to God.

In Scripture, Jesus told us not to use many words when we pray. He said, **“In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words”** (Matt 6:7).

I would like to share a story about a monk in a monastery, who every night before going to bed would gather his few belongings and stand by the window in his room looking out into the night. He would pray this simple prayer, ***“Come, Lord Jesus. Your servant is ready.”*** After waiting a few minutes he would then kneel down in prayer, and say, ***“I give you thanks Lord Jesus for giving me another day of preparation. Amen.”***

The widow in the story, is an example of praying consistently and persistently. She depended on the dishonest judge to render a just judgment. Somehow, she knew that God had written His laws in the heart of the judge despite his uncaring behavior. She was determined to help him dig down in his heart by using persistently few words so he would render her a just judgment.

When we apply the story to our relationship with God, we find out that Jesus tells us to have total dependency on God by praying all the time. It is only through our dependency on God that we will be successful. However, our prayers do not change God’s His mind. Just as the dishonest judge had it in him to render just judgment, so does God always has it in Him to answer our prayer. God is never persuaded to change His mind as we sometimes think. The answer He gives us at the right time, has always being in His mind.

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask Jesus to give us the grace to pray simple prayers always.