

Prayer – Persistence – be the voice for the powerless and the most vulnerable
Persistent Widow Lk 18: 1-8 **20 Oct 19 – 29th Sun in Ord Time 5:00 PM**

Intro

Good afternoon my brothers and sisters in Christ. The theme of my homily is

Pray– with persistence –and be a voice for the powerless and the most vulnerable

I must admit to you that I am not an avid reader, I probably have 10 books on my night stand that have stopped at page 20. Several years ago I read a book (completely) titled

A Man for Others, written by Patricia Treece.

She writes a biography about St Maximilan Kolbe, the Saint of Auschwitz. She uses first-hand accounts from eyewitnesses who observed or interacted with Fr Kolbe before and after his entry into Auschwitz in May 1941. In Auschwitz, Fr Kolbe never stopped praying, taking care of his flock, and loving. In the words of Patricia Treece,

“St Maximilan exemplified the Franciscan Ideal of loving without limits”. He challenged his fellow prisoners **to not give into evil** and to be the examples of Jesus love, **yes**, even to love the Nazis. The SS could not stand it when the priest would look intently into their eyes.

They would tell him, **(Look at the ground, not at us!)**

Fr Kolbe’s ministry reached out to **powerless and the most vulnerable** in Auschwitz. While it did not stop the killing that would continue until January 1945, he stood in the face of **injustice**. By his death gave hope to the prisoners that **every life was important and to live in the gospel was not in vain**.

October is Respect Life month in our church and one of the patron Saints of the Pro-life movement is St Maximilan Kolbe.

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Body

In Gospel today, Luke gives us the message of the parable before it is being told to them,

To pray always without becoming weary

We have two characters in the parable, the widow and the unjust judge. While we do not know the faith of the widow, we do know that in the law, people were called to help widows and orphans; in other words, those who were **powerless and the most vulnerable** in society.

Here is the faith of the judge in his own words. ‘ **I neither fear God or respect any human being** “. Not only does the judge disregard the law, but he lacks compassion. In the parable we hear that it is through the persistence of the widow and the judge’s concern that she will “strike him” (this is a pretty tough lady) that sways the judge to render a “**just**” decision.

In the first reading, from Exodus, we hear of a conflict between Amalek (Amalekites) and Moses (Israelites) . This scripture occurs during the time when Israel was wandering in the desert; between the Exodus and the entry into the Promised Land. Amalek had no fear of God as he attacked the rear column of Israel as they traveled in the desert. In attacking Israel’s rear column, Amalek was attacking those who were **powerless and the most vulnerable**. The ones who were older, the very young, and the sickly that could not keep up. Moses had enough and told Joshua to engage the Amalekites in battle. While Moses prayed with arms lifted, Joshua prevailed. Moses arms grew tired and with the help of Aaron and Hur, who lifted Moses’ arms in prayer until sunset, and Joshua prevailed over Amalek. The Lord heard their **persistent prayer** and intervened for them.

So let’s return to the ending of the Gospel, after the parable, Jesus says

Will not God secure the rights of his Chosen ones who callout to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them?

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Jesus is telling the disciples (and us) that we need to be persistent in our prayer and that God hears our prayers, and our prayers will be answered: if not now, then at the final judgment.

Be like the widow, pray without ceasing , you are **not** abandoned by God , don't lose heart , Jesus promises us, If an unrighteous judge will vindicate this widow because of her persistence , **how much more will the righteous judge** (Father) vindicate his people who pray to Him with persistence ...

We are to be **"persistent"** so that **we can be the instruments** to bring others to Christ for their salvation, for their conversion, even when it not easy!

We live in a fallen corrupt world, we cannot expect the **powerless and the most vulnerable to be vindicated in their or our lifetime** ...Jesus is speaking to reassure us that all justice will be served at the end times.

Closing

Pray– with persistence – for the conversion of all and be a voice for the **powerless and the most vulnerable**

As in Jesus time, there were unjust laws and judges, we have had unjust laws in this country The Supreme Court ruled in the Dred Scott Case in 1857 that "African Americans were not and never could be citizens". A Civil war was fought in which over 600,000 American soldiers died, and even after 90 years of laws, it took Dr MLK to awaken the nation's soul to address the **powerless and the most vulnerable**. He led the nation to **conversion** by his faith in God and commitment to non-violence.

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We have unjust laws today. To paraphrase the words of Br Dohle (from the Monastery of the HS) ,the abortion question is divisive, and I approach it with a certain trepidation. It is not a simple matter at all. I have family who are pro-choice. They focus on the mother, her plight, and wish to protect women from procedures that are illegal and perhaps a threat to their lives.. However, there are deep moral implications when it comes to this subject.

My intent is not to debate the morality of abortion, but to illustrate the after effects, the damage experienced by many of the parents of the aborted children.

When it comes to abortion, many women (and some men) are literally the **‘walking wounded’**. These women suffer in their pain in silence. They choose to tell no one. They know the date on the calendar when their child(ren) would have been born. For some, it was their only chance at motherhood, because later in life, they were unable to conceive. Some are angry at themselves, at the men who abandoned or bullied them or did not try harder to convince them to keep the baby. Some are angry at their parents who wanted to maintain their **reputation**, by paying for the abortion. Some are angry at the abortion clinics for lying to them. Some have been to the sacrament of reconciliation many times and have been given absolution by the priest, **but they can’t forgive themselves**.

There is hope – Here in the archdiocese we have a ministry known as Rachel’s Vineyard that is part of a nationwide effort for the church to offer hope to the women and men wounded by abortion. The local chapter is called PATH (Post Abortion Treatment and Healing). Their method is **Christ-Centered, confidential, personal, compassionate and non-judgemental**.

If you are suffering, please be assured that trained volunteer facilitators will help you find peace of heart. They will help you face your guilt, anger, isolation and sadness, and help you reconnect with yourself, others, and God, for some, after decades of pain.

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I can give a personal endorsement to this ministry. If you yourself or if you know of another that needs help and hesitant to ask, please pick up a PATH card from Shawn Buckley at the welcome desk or see the MOH for a pamphlet.

Pray– with persistence –be a voice for the powerless and the most vulnerable

Amen