

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

“When Prayer Becomes Identity”

Luke 18:1–8

There’s a story of a soldier stationed far from home during a long and brutal war. Every night, after the others had fallen asleep, he sat under a dim light and wrote a letter to the woman he loved. He never received a reply, partially because he was on the move so much. Weeks turned to months, months to years — still, he wrote. One of his comrades finally asked, “Why do you keep writing when you never receive an answer?” The soldier smiled and said, “Because writing reminds me who I am — a man who loves, not a man who waits to be loved.”

That’s the key to understanding today’s Gospel. Jesus tells us of a widow who keeps coming before an unjust judge. She has no influence, no wealth, no advocate — only her voice and her persistence. Day after day she returns, crying out for justice. The judge doesn’t care, but she refuses to vanish.

Her persistence isn’t strategy; it’s identity. She is not defined by the judge’s indifference, but by her own faithfulness. She knows who she is — a soul shaped by fidelity, not by outcomes; one who trusts that goodness is still worth seeking even when it seems ignored.

Likewise, the soldier wrote not to change the silence, but to keep himself from becoming silent inside. Most of us pray hoping to move God’s hand. But Jesus teaches a deeper truth: prayer is not about changing God — it is about being changed by God. The persistent widow and the letter-writing soldier both reveal something radical: the act of faithfulness itself reshapes the soul.

Prayer is not just a cry for results; it’s a continual return to relationship. It doesn’t only express belief — it sustains it. Every time we kneel, every time we whisper a plea into what feels like empty air, we declare again who we are: a people who love God enough to remain faithful in what seems like the silence.

This is what Jesus means when He ends the parable with a haunting question: “When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?” He’s not asking whether He’ll find people who prayed once; He’s asking whether He’ll find people whose prayer has become their identity — people who kept writing when the silence stretched long.

Sometimes we think God’s silence means distance, but it may mean depth. A relationship built only on answers is fragile; one sustained through silence is indestructible. When God seems quiet, He is not ignoring us — He is inviting us to pray in a new reality: not to get something, but to become someone.

The delay is the soil where faith takes root and learns to grow. The soldier became a man of enduring love because he wrote without reply. The widow became a woman of unbreakable faith because she returned without results. Their persistence didn’t just prove their love; it made their love real.

So, my friends, what if prayer is less about communication and more about communion? What if the silence you’re enduring is not the absence of God, but the slow construction of your truest self?

Every prayer that seems unanswered, every night of waiting, is God’s way of shaping our hearts to love as He loves — faithfully, freely, and without expectation. When the Son of Man returns, may He find us still writing — still praying, still believing, still becoming.

For in the end, the soldier’s letters were not unanswered after all; they became his own transformation.

And so, it is with us: Our prayer may not always change the world around us, but it will always change the soul within us — until our very being becomes the letter God has been writing all along.