

OCTOBER 16, 2016



TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



EXODUS 17:8-13

PSALM 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-4:2

LUKE 18:1-8

REFLECTION

I volunteer at my parish as a writer of the Prayer of the Faithful, which are read aloud at Sunday Mass after we stand and proclaim the Creed. Sometimes I struggle to find the right words; words that represent the needs of an often divided church, world, nation, and community. Words that deeply express God's desires, rather than my own desires. It's not easy, and I feel the weight of this responsibility. Sometimes I wonder: since God knows our every need, why even ask? I mean, can we really change the mind of God? And yet, Scripture is full of instances when faithful people petition the Lord for help, and God answers. Yes indeed, God always hears our prayers. But more so, prayer is not about getting everything we want or avoiding pain and death. Rather, prayer keeps us in relationship with God and close to his heart. It changes us, not God. Prayer should make us deeply aware of our dependence upon God. Prayers of petition are bold in that we dare to ask God for our deepest desires, just like the widow dared ask the dishonest judge, who finally relented. And surely if the dishonest judge did the right thing for the widow, then the Lord, in his infinite care, will all the more help us in our time of need. "To pray always, without becoming weary" (Luke 18) — this is what God desires. Are we willing to let God be in the driver's seat? Let us be careful about not manipulating God into our own image, but rather to let ourselves be molded into God's image.

ACTION

Psalms 121 promises, "Our help is from the Lord who made Heaven and Earth." God wants the best for us and desires our whole heart. And our God is near to us in Christ Jesus! Communicating is part of any relationship, especially your relationship with Christ. Prayer is simply communicating with God, who always upholds his end of the bargain. In your personal prayer this week, focus less on asking for specific outcomes and more on walking at Jesus' side. Talk to him like you would talk with a good friend: tell Jesus what makes you happy, what is breaking your heart, what makes you laugh with joy, and what makes you feel afraid. Ask Jesus to help you grow in faithful trust. You might just be delighted in how he will accompany you in ways you would least expect!



JOURNALING QUESTIONS



● Why do you pray in the first place? In what ways might God be calling you into deeper relationship through prayer?