Liturgical Leaflet for an Active Participation in the Celebration of the Eucharist



WORLD MISSION SUNDAY / SUNDAY FOR CULTURES

THE POWER OF PERSEVERING PRAYER

n this 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Church invites us to reflect on the power of persevering prayer. Faith can move mountains, but prayer can also move the heart of God. But for prayer to produce such a wonderful effect, it must be rooted in humble faith, that is, in the sincere conviction that we are in God's hands and that He loves us immensely, in spite of our unworthiness. If we have this disposition of heart, we will avoid the two aberrations of wanting to impose our will on God, or of giving up praying if our requests are not granted immediately. Our prayer must always be patterned after that of Jesus and end with the petition: "Your will not mine be done!" As we observe "World Mission Sunday," we are invited to remember with much admiration and love our brothers and sisters in Christ who have left their homelands to be the heralds of the Gospel of Christ and



witness to his love in the foreign missions. They should be our heroes. We should show our solidarity toward them, not only with our donations, but also with our prayer for all their needs and intentions.

As we observe "Sunday for Cultures," let us appreciate our own culture, even as we respect the cultures of other peoples. At the same time, let us also remember that no culture is perfect, and that some cultures may also contain customs and tradition that are not compatible with Gospel principles and values. It is our duty to point this out, and to do our best to affirm what is just and right, and to correct what is not.

INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

To you I call; for you will surely heed me, O God; turn your ear to me; hear my words. Guard me as the apple of your eye; in the shadow of your wings protect me.

(Cf. Ps (17 (16): 6, 8)

Greeting

P -The grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All–And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

P -Brethren, let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. (Pause)

P -Have mercy on us, O Lord. *All*-Lord, have mercy.

P -Show us, O Lord, your mer-

All-And grant us your salvation.

P – May almighty God have

mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **All-Amen.**

P – Kyrie eleison.
All – Kyrie eleison.
P – Christe eleison.
All – Christe eleison.
P – Kyrie eleison.
All – Kyrie eleison.

Gloria

All-Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give

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you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P -Almighty ever-living God, grant that we may always conform our will to yours and serve your majesty in sincerity of heart.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. *All*—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st Reading Ex 17:8-13 The Israelites' victory over the Amalekites proves the vital importance of the prayer of intercession, especially in the challenging moments of our life.

R -A reading from the Book of Exodus

In those days, Amalek came and waged war against Israel. Moses, therefore, said to Joshua, "Pick out certain men, and tomorrow go out and engage Amalek in battle. I will be standing on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

So Joshua did as Moses told him: he engaged Amalek in battle after Moses had climbed to the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur. As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. Moses' hands, how-

ever, grew tired; so they put a rock in place for him to sit on. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset. And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

The Word of the Lord. **All-Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

(Ps 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8)

R -Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth.



- * I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help come to me? My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. R.
- * May he not suffer your foot to slip; may he slumber not who guards you. Indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps, the Guardian of Israel. R.
- * The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade; he is beside you at your right hand. The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

 R.
- * The Lord will guard you from all evil; he will guard your life. The Lord will guard your coming and your going, both now and forever. R.

2nd Reading 2 Tm 3:14-4:2

Writing from prison to his beloved disciple Timothy, the apostle Paul reminds him and us of the immense value of Sacred Scripture and of the duty to proclaim its message with courage.

 R - A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy

Beloved: Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because vou know from whom you learned it. From infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

The Word of the Lord. *All*-Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation Heb 4:12

All-Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of God is living and effective, discerning reflections and thoughts of the heart.
Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel *Lk 18:1-8*

The command of the Lord to pray with faith and without ever losing heart is beautifully exemplified in the episode of the widow who got her wish by her persevering faith. Through it, we are reminded that faith remains the basic condition both for starting our prayer and for persevering in it.

P -The Lord be with you.

All-And with your spirit.

 P -A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All-Glory to you, O Lord.

GLOSSARY: • <u>Amalekites</u>: A nomadic tribe who dwelt in the Negeb, the stretch of desert between Sinai and Canaan. They had their first encounter with the Israelites at Rephidim. Several centuries after, they were almost totally exterminated by David. • <u>Joshua</u>: The assistant and successor of Moses. He

participated in the exploration of Canaan and accompanied Moses when he climbed Mount Sinai to receive the Commandments from the Lord. After the death of Moses, Joshua led the people of Israel in the conquest of the Promised Land and in renewing the Covenant with God.

Jesus told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary.

He said, "There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being.

And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, 'Render a just decision for me against my adversary.' For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, 'While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me, I shall deliver a just decision for her, lest she finally come and strike me.' "

The Lord said, "Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

The Gospel of the Lord.

All-Praise to you, Lord Jesus
Christ.

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow)* and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.* For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P -Encouraged by the example of Moses and the persistent widow, with humble faith, let us present to the Lord our petitions for the needs of all mankind:

All-We beseech, you, Lord, hear us.

C —For the Church, the universal sacrament of salvation: May She obtain the abundance of God's blessings for all mankind through her liturgy and the prayers of all her members. Let us pray.

R.

C —For the Holy Father, our bishops, and all religious leaders: May they continue to guide us with courage, always trusting in God's unfailing help. Let us pray. *R*.

C —For all priests, religious brothers, nuns and lay volunteers who work in the foreign missions: May they be brave heralds of the Gospel and witness to it through a life that mirrors the values they proclaim. Let us pray.

R.

C —For all those who treasure the Filipino culture: May we appreciate and live its authentic values, but also let go of customs and lifestyles which are not compatible with the Gospel values. Let us pray.

P -Lord God, accept us today, in spite of our unworthiness. Make us humble and persevering in our prayer, that we may receive the gift of eternal life. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All-Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts

P - Pray, brethren . . .

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P -Grant us, Lord, we pray, a sincere respect for your gifts, that, through the purifying action of your grace, we may be cleansed by the very mysteries we celebrate.

Through Christ our Lord. *All* – **Amen.**

Preface I

P -The Lord be with you.

All-And with your spirit.

P –Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All-It is right and just.

P –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvelous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith.

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

COMMUNION RITE



All-Our Father . . .

P -Deliver us, Lord . . .

All-For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread *All*—Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2×)

Lamb of God, you take

away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb. All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

Behold, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, who hope in his merciful love, to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine.

(Cf. Ps 33 (32): 18-19)

Prayer after Communion

P -Grant, O Lord, we pray, that, benefiting from participation in heavenly things, we may be helped by what you give in this present age and prepared for the gifts that are eternal.

Through Christ our Lord. *All* – **Amen.**

CONCLUDING RITES



P -The Lord be with you.

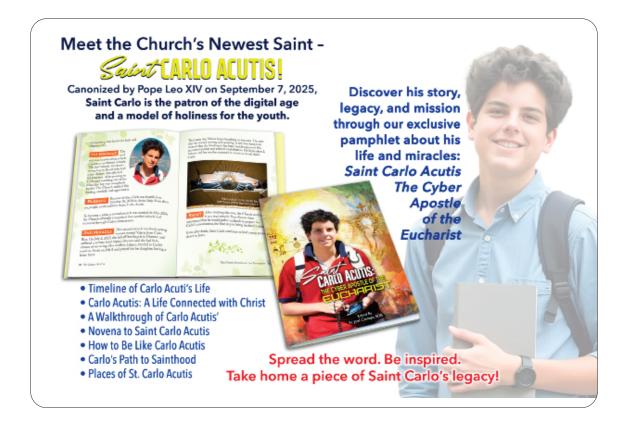
All-And with your spirit.

P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All-Amen.

P -Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All-Thanks be to God.





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PRAYING WITH, PRAYING FOR, PRAYING PERSISTENTLY

Kalakbay at Katoto

Today, Luke would have us consider the figure of an unjust judge who capitulates to the importunings of a widow in need. Dramatic?

Yes, there is unfolding drama in the parables of the Lord. Parables are basically stories, but, used skillfully by the master story-teller and teacher that Jesus was, are more than just bedtime stories to tuck children in bed with. No, parables were meant to disturb; they were meant to be so surprising as to catch people off guard, as to make hearers gasp in disbelief, and react either positively or negatively to them, especially if hearers miss the real lesson behind the initially shocking story.

Today's parable is no exception to this. But the first reading is no less shocking. It recounts what appears to be a strange, almost magical story about Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and Hur, caught up in battle with Amalekites who "came and waged war against Israel."

Taken in its right context, however, and pitted side by side with the other two readings, we see a totally different picture. We see, not magic, but a concrete portrayal of Moses and his companions, at prayer. We see a people in difficulty whose leaders show by their actions, how best to face a group of aggressors who are about to go against the plan of God for His beloved people. They do what they can. Moses sends Joshua to deal with the marauders. But they also take resort to prayer. By so doing, Moses prophetically tells his people, that ultimately, victory remains in God's hands, and that in times of trial, prayer and faith in God are just as important as their feeble human efforts.

We live in equivalently difficult times. We live, too, in a world marred by conflictuality, tensions, and even by armed and, at times, violent, struggles. We reflect today on what today's readings can teach us as we face the challenges of our times.

In the history of Christian spirituality, one of the images used to represent the call to a personal relationship with God, is that of Christian life as a call to engage in some kind of spiritual warfare. Like Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and Hur, we are continually face to face with forces that appear so formidable.

Our so-called "foes," however, need not be external to us. Indeed, many times, our opponent resides in us, and comes from our very own person – our very own tendency to sin: "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin. What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate" (Romans 7:14-15). Indeed, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," as the Lord reminds us.

Moses knew this first hand. Moses, who "kept his hands raised up," (a symbol of prayer), knew exhaustion at some point. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. He prayed. But he grew weary praying. And it was at such a time that others came to his support. Others came to pray with him. Others came to pray for him. And with others, persistent prayer spelled the difference between defeat and victory.

The times are indeed challenging, to say the least. All the trends, studies, and statistics do not sound good for institutionalized religion. Mainstream churches all over the world, including the Catholic Church all suffer from decline in memberships. Ironically, despite the mass exodus of people from organized religion, there is paradoxically so much hunger for spirituality, and for personal meaning in life today. But there is a strong and marked reaction against all forms of institutionalization, hierarchical structures, and authoritative pronouncements from leaders and pastors. Pastors like me, like Moses, can succumb to weariness and discouragement in the face of all this undeniable reality.

But today, I would like to think that we all are getting a shot in the arm, a much needed vaccine to guard us against the flu of despair and lack of faith. Our response to the first reading sums it all up: "Our help is from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

The dramatic elements of the first reading show this much. Prayer is essential for the life of the serious leader like Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and Hur. Without prayer, the battle waged by the Amalekites in our midst, (which includes our own self-inflicted temptations) cannot be won. But the story makes it clear, that in the end, victory is God's work. But the story also makes clear the pressing need for us not only to pray, but to pray with others, to pray for others. Aaron and Hur supporting Moses' weary arms (and drooping spirit) represents this truth. At a time of weakness, pastors also need the prayer of those they work for and work with.

The words of St. Paul to his protégé, Timothy, cannot be more apt in this regard:

"proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching" (2 Tim 4:2).

The Lord has been leading me to a whole lot of realizations over the past so many years. At a time when I can very well say to myself not without a little pride that I had "been there; done that" kind of thing, He still teaches me hard lessons to live by. And usually, His teachings come through the school of hard knocks – the school of suffering.

Modesty aside, this I can declare... I worked hard. I did a whole lot more than what was expected of me. Or so, I thought. But there was one thing I sorely missed out on. I missed to give due emphasis to prayer.

No, don't get me wrong. I did pray. But the prayer the Lord teaches today is not that kind of prayer that attributes victory to the *pray-er*. The prayer that the Lord shows us today is the prayer that goes beyond disappointment, the prayer that is marked by persistence, by faith, and by communality. It is the prayer which guarantees victory, not for me, not on account of me, but guaranteed by God's power and God's love.

This means there is something more that the *pray-er* needs to do. He should give way, step aside, and while praying with faith, he or she ought to allow room for others to pray for him, pray with him, and – like Moses, Aaron, and Hur, and yes, the widow in Jesus' parable - pray persistently.

