

From the Pastor's Office

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The story of the battle between Amalek and his army brings to mind the story of Constantine's battle against opposing Roman forces from the Western part of the Roman Empire. Constantine won this battle, and it paved the way for the rise of Christianity in the Roman world. The famous story tells us that the night before the battle Constantine doubted if he would win this battle. In desperation he prayed to the Christian God. In a dream he was told to daub the Christian symbol of the cross on all the shields and banners of his army. I guess the troops grew in confidence, so much so that they won the battle convincingly. I am talking about the power of symbols and what they represent. The Nazi world was dripping in Nazi insignia to denote power and control. We all rally to the flag. The lovely story of the American national anthem comes to mind. After the pounding by the British forces at Fort McHenry, people wondered what they might see when daylight came again. They were astounded to see that the flag was still flying. This gave them great confidence and courage to continue the fight. The same scenario happened when Moses and his people fought against Amalek. Moses was not a military general leading his troops to battle. These were ordinary people who fought for their cause. Moses stood up on a height so that his people could see him. As they entered the battle, they saw Moses raising his hands, to signify that the God Yahweh was with His people in the midst of the fight. This gave them courage. God is with us. That's all we want to know. I want to know that God is with me. Knowing that, I can cope with anything. We must never underestimate the power of symbols and what they mean. They give us heart. They rally the people to arms when necessary. Knowing that God is with us, we march to the fight with courage and conviction. I remember reading about the soldiers who went into ancient battle. Their job was to march across a battlefield. The odds were high that they would all be killed. Naturally they were afraid. Naturally they prayed to all the Gods they knew to protect them. It turns out that many "Christian" soldiers emblazoned on the back of their shields a pray to God for protection. Whatever works...



With love,
Fr. Pat