



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

**October 16, 2022**

**Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

We live in an age where what is instant is greatly valued. In the past, for example, food took a long time to prepare and to cook. Today, we can buy a product, put it in the microwave, and we have a hot meal with minimal labor and expenditure of time. Journeys that in the past took months, now take hours. With emailing, messages that once took days to go from one place to another now take seconds. Speed is a phenomenon of our time. Much of this is to be welcomed. A huge range of possibilities are now open to us that an earlier generation could not even have imagined possible. What a marvelous facility it is to be able to send the equivalent of a letter to a friend or family member on the other side of the world and have it responded to in seconds. How wonderful it is to be able to travel to so many places so quickly and so relatively cheaply.

Yet, for all the speed of much of modern life, we know that the pace of some things has not changed. Oak trees do not grow much quicker today than they did hundreds of years ago. The coastline of our land is not eroding that much faster than it has done throughout the centuries. The earth's orbit around the sun has not quickened over millions of years. The time it takes to build true friendships with people has not significantly changed. We know that we cannot create deep human relationships at the press of a button. The forming of good relationships continues to take time and patience; it is characterized by both progress and set-backs; ground that is lost often has to be regained. The quality of perseverance is needed in human relationships, the willingness to stay faithful when the relationship is in difficulty and to work through the difficulty, perhaps with help from others. Perseverance, persistence, is a quality that comes into play in those areas of life that are not amenable to instant solution or an instant response.

The parable that Jesus speaks in the gospel reading this morning suggests that we will need that quality of perseverance or persistence in our relationship with God. Jesus tells a story of a powerful man, a judge, and a powerless woman, a widow. The widow knew that she had justice on her side, and it was her passion for justice that gave her the quality of persistence. She kept coming to the judge looking for justice, refusing to take 'no' for an answer. Even though she was powerless, her persistence made her powerful. The power of her persistence wore down the powerful judge and she eventually received the justice she was entitled to. Jesus presents this widow to his disciples, to us, as a model of persistent faith. It is not that God is like the unjust judge in the parable.

On the contrary, God's passion for justice is greater than our own. It is rather that we will need something of the same persistent faith the widow showed if God's justice is to become a reality in our midst. The widow's efforts did not meet with instant success; her pleas did not receive an instant answer. Yet, she persevered and her persistence brought about what God wanted to happen. There are many contemporary examples we can think about of the persistent prayer of the widow in today's world. We could all probably think of other examples closer to home. When the seemingly powerless are filled with God's passion for justice they become powerful, like the widow in the gospel reading. Today we might pray for something of her passionate faith in our own lives.