

FEBRUARY 13, 2020
Thursday of the 5th Week in OT
Mark 7: 24-30

PERSISTENT IN PRAYER

“In 2009, when the Taliban took control of her homeland in Pakistan and decreed that educating girls would soon be a crime, a 12-year old girl attending a school under Taliban control used a pseudonym and began writing for the BBC blog. She felt girls deserved education... and she wanted to share her plight. Malala wrote about topics ranging from her desire to become a doctor to her fear that her school would be targeted and attacked. For the first time, people outside Pakistan were experiencing a vulnerable, first-person account of Taliban rule from the perspective of a young girl who was living it. One day, the New York Times contacted Malala, asking to interview her for a documentary. The family agreed because they believed Malala’s message needed to reach more people who would support her plight for girls’ education. Seeing the interview, the Taliban were enraged. So, one morning, just after Malala won Pakistan’s National Youth Peace Prize advocating for girls’ education, Taliban soldiers boarded the school bus she was riding and shot her in the head and neck. Miraculously, she didn’t die. She was rushed to the hospital and airlifted to safety in the United Kingdom. After the attempt on her life, it would have been understandable if Malala quit advocating for girls’ education. But her near-death experience seemed only to strengthen her resolve. As she recovered from her wounds, she boldly demanded change for her people. Within weeks, more than 2 million Pakistani people signed a Right to Education Bill that she’d promoted. Then lawmakers listened, ratifying the country’s first Right to Free and Compulsory Education Bill. And Malala continued her advocacy, eventually being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize before her 18th birthday.”¹

¹ www.quora.com

Our gospel for today talks about persistent in prayer. The Greek woman is an outsider, not a member of the chosen people of Israel. With her courage and perseverance, she went to Jesus, pleaded Him to heal her daughter.

Why Jesus told the woman that is not fair to give the children's food to the dog? "The Jews often spoke of the Gentiles with arrogance and insolence as unclean dogs since the Gentiles were excluded from God's covenant and favor with Israel. For the Greeks the dog was a symbol of dishonor and was used to describe a shameless and audacious woman. Jesus, no doubt, spoke with a smile rather than with an insult because this woman immediately responds with wit and faith – 'even the dogs eat the crumbs.'"² Jesus Christ admired the woman's persistent faith and unquestionable love. She was willing to endure rejection in order to obtain healing for her daughter.

My sisters and brothers, our willingness to persist and no matter opposition appears insurmountable, success is just around the corner for those brave enough to persevere. Like Malala and the woman in the gospel, we must not give up. According to Vince Lombardi, a great football player and coach in 1960's, and the NFL Super Bowl trophy named in his honor, a Knights of Columbus member and who always attended daily masses and received communion: "Winners never quit, and quitters never win."³ So, don't quit, be persistent and let us bring all our problems and difficulties to Jesus, continue to humble ourselves before Him and tirelessly implore His help, strength and direction.

² dailyscripture.servantsoftheword.org

³ www.overallmotivation.com