

## Praying for Justice

If we take a step back and look at Jesus' oratory skills, it is quite amazing. He has mastered the use of several oratory skills such as the *reduction ad absurdum* where you show that a statement is false by moving it towards its conclusion: a kingdom divided against itself is ruined, if Satan drives out Satan, he is dividing himself, therefore, why would I drive the demons out by the power of Beelzebub?

Or he uses the *argumentum a fortiori* where you prove a second point by emphasizing the validity of the first point. 'Would you who are evil give your children a snake when they ask for a fish, or a rock when they asked for bread? How much more would your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him!'

**He isn't just using these oratorical techniques to show off, but to convince, to persuade us of a heavenly truth which we can become blind to, and today he wants to remind us of the type of God we have.**

Today Jesus uses the *a fortiori argument* (snake/fish and rock/bread) to convince his listeners. 'Look even an unjust judge would grant this poor widow justice not because he is just or nice but basically because he is annoyed. How much more would the True Sun of Justice, Justice Itself grant justice to us because he loves us, because we are his children, because he is Love itself. How much more!'

"She moved the unjust judge by her persistence to listen to her. Not that he was influenced by justice or mercy, but he was overcome by weariness" (St. Augustine).

And so Jesus' intention in speaking in this manner is to instill confidence in us that our persistence in prayer would not go unheard, confidence that we can 'always pray and not lose heart'.

Yet Jesus is not just speaking about persistence in prayer. He is talking about a particular persistence in prayer in reference to a particular situation. If we look deeper into the text, Jesus is making an implicit claim.

When Jesus says, "will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night?" what is the implication? That his chosen ones are for a time deprived of justice and that is why they are crying out to him. This parable follows

upon Jesus' statement about his second coming, and what he is implying here is that before he comes again, there will be persecutions, injustice will be dealt to his chosen ones.

Luke affirms this sentiment in chapter 21: they will lay hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake...you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends and some of you they will put to death" (Lk 21:12, 16).

Is this not the case in our times right now where the lives of 100 000 unborn children are unjustly taken away from them each year? Where Catholic education is under attack and even the statement "*We believe men and women were created in the image of God, after His likeness, and therefore have transcendent, intrinsic worth*" is considered to be unwelcome, uncaring by our government. The poison of injustice has also seeped into the household of the Church too and many children and people have experienced injustice at the hands of those who are called to be ministers of God!

In times like these we are tempted to lose heart, yet it is for times like these that the power of the Gospel is given to us as a beacon of hope: Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart...Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them"

My brothers and sisters, Jesus gives us absolute confidence in our Father who will answer our prayers especially when there may seem to be no end to injustice. Let us pray always with great persistence knowing that our God who is Justice itself will not abandon us, let us entrust ourselves to him in faith for "when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"