

Never get Tired!

Twentieth-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Ex 17:8-13 / Lk 18:1-8
Ave Maria Catholic Church, October 15, 2022 – Fr. David M Vidal

Moses was a man of God. Moses was a man of prayer. God chose him to lead the people of Israel out of slavery into the promised land. That was not an easy journey. It was full of obstacles and temptations. The people of Israel had to fight, as we just heard in today's reading.

The book of Exodus tells us that Joshua engaged Amalek in battle, and Moses was on the top of a hill with Aaron and Hur. As long as Moses kept his hands raised to heaven, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the battle.

Then, Moses's hands grew tired. He had to sit on a rock, and Aaron and Hur supported his hands. Then, his hands remained steady, and Israel overcame Amalek.

In Saint Augustine's terms, Amalek represents the "*City of the World*," and Israel represents the "*City of God*." The battle against Amalek represents our spiritual battle against everything that traps us in this world, whatever becomes an obstacle or an impediment against God's love and God's will in our lives. For this reason, we must fight Amalek. Victory means eternal life and eternal happiness. Defeat only means eternal death and misery.

The number of horses or swords did not determine the victory against Amalek. The victory depended on those hands lifted in prayer. We understand, then, that the weapons we must use against the enemies of our souls and our union with God must differ from the weapons that people usually use to fight the fights of this world.

Saint Paul describes these weapons in his letter to the Ephesians: "*Put on the armor of God . . . Stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield . . . And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit,*" (Ephesians 6: 13-18).

Our fight is spiritual, and we must use spiritual means. If we do not use them, there is no path to victory.

Now, how long must we fight this fight?

As long as we live in this world, we cannot escape this fight. Then, the natural question is: who can endure this fight? If Moses, a man of God, as holy as he was, grew weary. If

Moses, whom God chose to lead the people of Israel, had to sit on a rock and be helped by others, how can we hope to overcome our own battles?

There is an answer to those questions. We are not alone. God does not abandon us. God came to our aid and gave us his Son, Jesus. In one of his catechesis, St John Chrysostom says: "*Moses was the great leader and commander; we have a new Moses, God himself, as our leader and commander.*" The new Moses, Jesus, is greater than the old Moses. The new Moses, Jesus, worked tirelessly for our eternal salvation.

Jesus tirelessly offered the sacrifices of his active life. Traveling, preaching, and healing the sick filled up his whole day and often part of the night, (see Matthew 8:16; 19:13). He often had no time to rest, and when He tried to do so, He was disturbed, but never regretted it, (see Mark 6:34).

And He never got tired, even though those He came to save rejected Him, accused Him of blasphemy, and condemned Him to death.

Then, on the Cross, he extended his hands and lifted them up in supplication. The nails fastened his hands; however, they were not the nails, but Jesus's will that allowed his arms to be firm and steady. In obedience to the Father, Jesus offered his life for us on the Cross and lifted his arms for our eternal victory.

Even now, He remains with his arms lifted in supplication so that we can have the best of the battle. Every time we come to Mass, we hear his prayer of supplication to the Father on our behalf for our salvation. We are not alone. God is with us!

In every Mass, we come before Christ, the Eternal High Priest. Then, saint John Chrysostom teaches: "*When you see the ordained priest at the altar raising the sacred host towards heaven, do not believe that this man is the (principal) priest, but raising your thoughts above what strikes the senses, consider the hand of Jesus Christ invisible extended.*"

If Jesus intercedes for us by extending his hands toward the Father, what should we fear?

Then, like Joshua, we must keep fighting, and the victory will be ours! Like the widow of the parable, we must keep working and asking in supplication without becoming weary!

We must never get tired! This expression became the prayer of Bishop Manuel González. He was a holy bishop who worked in Palencia, Spain, in the 1930s. Saint Manuel González García was known as the Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle as he wanted to draw people closer to Jesus, who is in the Eucharist. We might well describe him as one of those saints of the Blessed Sacrament.

And this is the prayer that St. Manuel González directed to our Blessed Mother:

Immaculate Mother! May we never get tired! Our Mother! This is our petition: may we never grow weary! Even though discouragement for the lack of success or the ingratitude of people may assault us, and our weakness soften us, even though the fury of our enemy may persecute and slander us, even though we may lack material means and assistance from others, even though all our works may fall so that we may have to start again . . . Dear Mother! Help us never to get tired!

Always steadfast, with determination and encouragement, with a smile on our face, with our eyes fixed on our neighbors and their needs to help them, and with the eyes of the soul fixed on the Heart of Jesus who is in the tabernacle, help us to remain steadfast and be faithful to God's providential plan for each one of us.

May we never turn our heads to look back!

May we never cross our arms!

May we never indulge ourselves with unfruitful cries!

While we have a drop of blood to give, some coins to distribute, a little energy to spend, a word to say, some encouragement in our hearts, some strength in our hands or in our feet with which we can serve and give glory to God and honor you, our most Blessed Mother, and bring some good to our brethren.

My Mother, let me say for the last time: death before getting tired! Amen.