

We are in a battle

There is a war going on in the world

Good and evil exist

Today's readings help us find the way through our battles

They give us lessons in prayer

Personal prayer and communal prayer

So we can emerge victorious

Not through our own merits and deeds

But through the grace and merits of Christ

To whom we are joined in prayer

We see this battle in our first reading

Amalek was waging war on the Israelites

So Moses instructs Joshua

Pick out certain men and engage him in battle

Moses climbs a hill to observe and pray

While his hands are lifted in prayer

Joshua and the Israelites have the better of the battle

But when he tires

His hands drop

And Amalek has the better of the fight

So Aaron and Hur come to his aid

They support his arms in prayer

And Joshua and the Israelites mow down Amalek and his people

The military battle described is more than a physical battle

This is representative of our spiritual battle

The Israelites

The people of God, as a community

This is who we are, many and one at the same time

Amalek and his people

Satan and his demons

These are the enemy we are fighting

Moses, representing the Church

The Church Triumphant

The angels and saints of God

And the Church militant

Including those not in the actual battle

But those that have another role

The elderly, not able to take up arms

The cloistered nuns and monks

Those who have a vocation of prayer and sacrifice

Joshua, an individual fighting the battle

Each of us has a personal battle to fight

Aaron and Hur

Those that are in supporting roles

Offering time, treasure and talent to the battle

We are in a battle

As individuals and collective

The widow in our Gospel helps us see our path in this battle

It is prayer

Persistent and direct prayer

At this time

A woman was valued in the men in her life

A father, husband, sons

So this widow had no one to turn to

If there were, they would have pleaded her case

She was seeking a just decision from this dishonest judge

One who feared neither God nor man

In other words

As a judge, he cared less about justice

He will not give in

She will not give up

But he tires of this standoff in this battle

Her persistence pays off

And he issues a decision in her favor

If an unjust judge will do the right thing in the face of perseverance

How much more the righteous judge?

But this perseverance can be tiring

We can become discouraged and give in to despair

Temptations Paul faced as well

We have been reading the same Letter for the past couple weeks

The 2nd Letter of Paul to Timothy

The last Letter of Paul

Written in prison

As he was waiting for the death penalty to be carried out

Not a death penalty for doing anything wrong

But for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Something those in power did not want to hear

And they were willing to go the extremes to silence him

But Paul remained faithful

He persevered in prayer

As he encourages Timothy to do

As he encourages us to do as well

We are in a battle

And the fight is for souls

Our own

Our loved ones

And for those throughout the world

Today and for future generations

But when the Son of Man comes

Will he find faith on the earth?

If we can follow the example in our readings

He will

When we find ourselves tired

As Moses was when he let his arms rest

We want to be faithful

But we are worn down

We come to Mass

Not as individuals praying for our own needs alone

But as a community

Joining our prayer as one

Praying for others

Being prayed for ourselves

This intercessory prayer is a powerful prayer

A prayer that can hold us up in our weakness

Our prayer holding up others

Even those we do not know

Helping them in their battle

Then sometimes we can find our prayer to be routine

We can be in a rut

Follow Paul's advice to Timothy

Go to Sacred Scripture

He says all scripture is inspired of God

And useful in teaching and training

We may not have a lot of time to pray

We don't need a lot of time

Try the psalms if you find yourself in a rut

The psalms cover the entirety of what we seek from God

Psalms to thank him

To praise him

To call out 'why is this happening to me?'

To seek His help

Even psalms to ask God to crush our enemy

Finally, we can become frustrated

We can pray and pray for something

And nothing seems to change

So we have to ask

What is our prayer?

There are billions of messages every day being collected by the NSA

But the NSA doesn't care for those sending these messages

Billions of prayers collected by God every day

By a God who does care

And a God who will respond

Are our hearts open to receive his response?

Or are we so locked in that we will only accept an answer we desire?

Will there be faith when the Son of Man returns

If we intercede

And allow others to intercede for us

If we allow Sacred Scripture to point us in the right direction

If we persevere and never give up

This is the call for each generation

If we hold up our end and pass it on to the next

Yes, there will be faith on earth

Whenever the Christ returns