

29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 15-16, 2016

*Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

Readings: Exodus 17: 8-13; 2 Tim 3:14-4:2; Luke 18:1-8

*Adjutorium nostrum in nomine domini. All: Qui fecit coelum et terram.*

Our Help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. These words, found in both Psalm 121 and 124 are repeated in the solemn form of blessing at the end of a Mass, in the presence of a Bishop and serve as a powerful reminder of the nature of our help, assistance that is found in the Lord.

I recall several years ago the incredible story of the trapped miners in Chile. For 69 days, the men spoke of putting their trust in the Lord God to save and lift them up. In the crucible of suffering, we discover if these nice words truly have meaning.

One miner, Mario Sepulveda, said Wednesday that he emerged from his confinement a changed man. "I buried 40 years of my life down there, and I'm going to live a lot longer to be a new person." During the time he was trapped inside the mine, Sepulveda said he saw both good and evil. "I was with God, and I was with the devil. They fought, and God won," he said. Sepulveda said he grabbed God's hand and never doubted that he would be rescued. But a number of years later, many of the still struggle. They found fame, but no fortune and many still struggle to make ends meet.

Jesus taught the disciples to pray always and not grow weary. We face very uncertain future in our nation and world, and yet this is not a time for weariness, but one of following the Lord, so that we might be truly equipped for every good work. The Lord does not desire to allow our feet to slip, as the Psalmist reminds us. Aaron and Hur supported Moses, that he might engage Amalek in battle. We stand ready to support our brothers and sisters, not in battle, but in good works.

Weariness is always a threat in the spiritual life, and it is not realistic to think that we can keep going at full spiritual strength day after day, week after week, year after year. Our spiritual lives have their own peaks and valleys.

Like the widow in today's Gospel, we must have persistence. This applies equally to our state in life, to our vocation. Marriages that stand the test of time often do so because the individuals involved are possessed with a keen sense of commitment in other areas of their lives as well. This leads them

We should not quit a class in school without good reason. I recall doing so after  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the year as a senior in high school, and while I had my reasons, I never did that again, as I felt in a real sense that I was quitting a very difficult calculus class, rather than sticking it out. There is tremendous value in remaining true to our promises, even if there is short-term pain in the midst of the struggle.

Our struggles test us to the core and make us stronger in the long run. How much more so for our spiritual life? We must approach the divine well of God's grace regularly, lest we grow weary. The Holy Father spoke to priests a year ago at the Chrism Mass in Rome, addressing this topic head on in our lives. He said:

Do I know how to rest by accepting the love, gratitude and affection which I receive from God's faithful people? Or, once my pastoral work is done, do I seek more refined relaxations, not those of the poor but those provided by a consumerist society? Is the Holy Spirit truly "rest in times of weariness" for me, or is he just someone who keeps me busy?

These words are appropriate for all of us, not just priests. Each according to our own state in life; God will provide the strength to help keep our hands held high towards the heavens.