



Reflection from Sr. Michele Morek, OSU

When I was in grade school and heard the scriptural admonition to “pray always,” it did not sound appealing at all; indeed, it sounded impossible, because I associated praying with kneeling inside a hot church--instead of running and playing outside. But in the Gospel today Jesus enjoins us to pray always, and adds “without becoming weary!”

In the first reading today, Moses gives us a little insight into how it might be done. As he prayed for Joshua’s success in the battle, he prayed until he could no longer stand, then someone pulled up a rock for him to sit on. When he could no longer hold up his arms, Aaron and Hur supported his arms for him.

We pray as a global community! In my formation as a member of a religious community I learned that the whole community is present in the ministry of each member, and in the prayer of each member. So, it has always been consoling to think that when I am not able to pray, *someone* in my community is praying and I am present in that prayer. When *someone* at Saint James is praying, we are all present, holding up their arms (or at least providing a rock for them to sit on!) We are all one body.

There is a word for the annoying prayer strategy of the widow who was seeking justice from the unjust judge in the Gospel today: “importunate!” (Definition: *persistent, especially to the point of annoyance or intrusion.*) There is another word that fits her well: “dogged!” We all know what dogs are like when they want something, don’t we? Maybe they don’t bite or howl, but who can eat a peaceful meal with those pitiful doggy eyes on us? Unblinking, for as long as it takes, until we finish eating or give them something. Dogs know how to pray!

So luckily, we now know there is more than one way to pray, and they are all good. I know that “lifting up my eyes to the mountains” is a valid way for me, the nature-lover, to pray.

I’m sure you have heard the story about the pastor who noticed an illiterate, elderly man staying in church for long hours. He asked the man what kind of prayers he liked to say, and the old man replied that when he prayed, “I jus’ look at him and he jus’ looks back at me.” Sounds like something any of us might be able to do!

*Blessings,
Sr. Michele*