

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Ex 17:8-13; Ps 121; 2 Tm 3:14-4:2; Lk 18:1-8

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The topic of today's readings is clear: the importance of persevering in prayer. Amalek was an archenemy of Israel; Ex 17:16 declares that Yahweh is at war with Amalek forever. So Amalek represents evil, and it is against this enemy that Moses prays for victory; when his upraised arms got tired, he did not stop, but rather his companions helped by keeping them raised up for him.

The psalmist raises his (or her) eyes to the mountains, on high where God dwells. Though we grow sleepy when we pray, God does not sleep: He is always there to sustain us. God is called a "shadow" ("shade"), which protects from the scorching sun (or even from the harmful influence of the moon). In Ps 91, the psalmist addresses the faithful person as one who dwells in the shelter or secret hiding-place of God Most High (*Elyon*), who spends the night in Almighty God's (*Shadday*) protective shadow. When God came down to dwell with His people in Ex 40, God was a protective cloud by day and a guiding fire by night; Israel made no move except as directed by God's cloud and fire, Nm 9:15-23. The psalm also reflects this total dependence on God who should direct our every step. We learn God's ways by carefully meditating the Holy Scriptures, which give us "wisdom for salvation." They equip us for every good work. We cannot love or obey God too much; Timothy is urged to persevere, to not give up, to not be cowardly in teaching the truth of Christ, to not give in to worldly standards regarding what is "good form" or a "good balance."

Jesus in the gospels likes to teach us to trust God by comparing Him to our experience of human fathers, or, in this case, to a judge. Even mediocre human fathers give good things to their children (Mt 7:7-11; Lk 11:9-13), and even a corrupt judge will give justice to a poor widow out of self-interest: how much more will God who is all good hear our prayer! But our prayer must be constant and must transform us into real children of God; this is how our world will also be transformed, and how God's Kingdom will come.