

HOMILY 29TH SUN OT YRC 2019

There is a minister in England by the name of Rev. David Guest that had some difficulty getting his driver's license. He required 632 lessons over a period of 17 years. He spent \$11,000 on lessons. He wore out 8 instructors and crashed 5 cars. He said: "When I was told I passed I bent down on my knees and thanked God." What was going on here? Maybe he should not be driving. But actually, the problem was he just could not drive a car with a manual transmission. As soon as he switched to an automatic transmission he was fine. Now I find it hard to believe that none of the instructors identified that this was the problem. I think it is more likely that they told him but he too narrowly focused on getting what he wanted on his own terms.

We have another parable in the Gospel reading today. There is a judge who neither fears God nor respected any human being. A poor helpless widow was persistent in asking him to render a just decision and eventually wore the judge down so that he gave her what she asked for. Jesus said this parable is "about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary." I think one lesson from this parable is that if a judge that neither fears God nor respected any human being will give the widow a just judgment, how much more likely is it that the God who loves us unconditionally will take care of us. Sometimes when we pray and nothing happens immediately we get discouraged and think that the prayer is a waste of time, and Give up on God. And sometimes we are persistent in prayer, but we keep asking for the same thing and will not see anything else. Like if we keep praying for the same thing God will eventually get tired of listening to us and he will give us what we ask for. God always wants what is best for us. God sees a bigger picture than we do. Each of our lives is part of a huge mosaic that only God can see. Our lives are all interconnected. We are each a small, but very important part of that mosaic. We need to trust what God has in store for us. Our prayer does not change God, but

it can change us if we are open to it. Prayer may or may not change our circumstances but it can change us. It was good that Rev. Guest was persistent in getting his driver's license, but it took him a very long time to realize that he was just not going to be able to drive a car with a manual transmission. I have come to realize that when something happens that is out of my control and unlikely to change, I need to accept that this is what is supposed to happen and I need to discern how I need to change to make the best of the situation. I don't want to spend 17 years trying to get a driver's license. I want to adjust and get on with life, and if I stay persistent in prayer, I will be able to figure out how to do that.

I also think the judge that neither fears God nor respects any human being represents so many people in our culture today. There seems to be such a lack of civility and respect for others in our culture. The helpless widow represents those of us who are holding on to our faith. The widow eventually wears down the judge and he does what she asks, but remember she is asking for a just decision. She is persistent in asking for the good. I think another message of the parable is that we need to be persistent in doing the right thing. Sometimes I think we feel powerless in dealing with the lack of civility and respect for God and other human beings in our culture today. The temptation when we feel powerless is to say "if we cannot beat them, join them" and we just do not want to get caught up in that. We need to remain persistent in prayer so that we can continue to do the right thing. Sometimes even if we feel powerless, if we remain persistent in prayer and persistent in doing the right thing, eventually we can wear down the evil forces in the world, and we can accomplish the good. If we remain persistent in prayer we will be able to discern when we need to change course, and when we need to be persistent in doing the right thing. We need to remain persistent in prayer and allow Jesus to shape up. Do not give up on doing the right thing, but do not be resistant to change when necessary.