

Persistence, a Plan and a Prayer

Crises are now part of our everyday life! Whether it's our own personal issues run amok, another devastating natural disaster or a political scandal that only foretells even greater division, crises are apparently here to stay. The Scriptures proclaimed today offer us a way of dealing with present and potential crises.

In tirelessly supporting Moses in his crisis, Aaron and Hur were, in their model of teamwork, as heroic as Joshua was in confronting the enemy on the battlefield. In much the same way, the relentless pursuit of the widow's petition to the judge in the Lukan parable is also a model of confronting a crisis. These Scriptures lead us to reflect on the necessity of persistence in the face of a crisis since giving up should never be an option!

How often do we get discouraged at the odds facing us in a crisis? Perhaps our penchant for getting things done NOW is the culprit. Or we expect someone else, human or divine, to step in as a substitute for our personal involvement. But "God helps those who help themselves,"

right? In political, social or financial crises, as well as in the healing of personal relationships, persistence is an essential virtue.

In the biblical stories offered today there is also evidence of a plan. In the Exodus story, a seemingly unforeseen glitch: Moses' weakened arms, produces a creative solution: Aaron and Hur to the rescue! The widow's plan is almost devious in its creativity; it is her obnoxious behavior that wins her a hearing. In both cases success was not happenstance. There was no knee-jerk reaction to the crises, no panic; but rather a well-thought out, even creative, plan.

Too often we look for easy solutions or pat answers to issues that confront us. In spite of the tension and stress of the crises we face in our daily lives, we need to take a deep breath and get creative. Especially when it comes to the crises that arise in our interpersonal relationships, a well thought-out plan will do more than a quick fix. A sarcastic remark, for example, might bring satisfaction in a personal conflict, but it will hardly lead to anything vaguely resembling reconciliation. Neither panic nor impulse will ever outdo a well-conceived plan.

In addition to persistence and creative planning , there is also a clear theme of the power of prayer running through these scriptures and inviting our response to crises. Though I would never disclaim the efficacy of any form of prayer, I propose that in a crisis situation, what faith demands is a prayer of sublime and humble letting go. With a creative plan in place and persistence as the strategy, humbly letting go and letting God would be a profound prayer, a true act of faith.

Our Sunday Eucharist allows us to enter into just that spirit by seeing, through Word and Sacrament, God's real presence in our lives, so that this celebration will give us the courage to face any crisis with persistence, a plan and a prayer!