

PRAYER, PERSISTENCE AND POLITICS



Prayer. How many of us pray daily, have a conversation with God? Perhaps we say grace before our evening meal. A prayer of thanks after we've just had a narrow escape from injury. Maybe a prayer of desperation—pleading—when something in our lives simply is not going right and as an ordinary human we cannot fix it.

When in need pray. Pray once and God might answer you. Sunday's readings, however, emphasize the need to pray constantly, to be persistent in your prayers "whether it is convenient or inconvenient."

Politics sometime seems like an Alice-in-Wonderland journey because schedules and timelines of legislation matter little; outcomes are often in doubt, the outcome itself changes daily, and after agreed upon laws can mean what the authors and supporters did not intend it to mean. Yet we engage in the political process because "we are called to take an active part in public life."

"Catholics need to **act** in support of (Catholic Church) principles and policies in public life. It is the particular vocation of the laity to transform the world. We have to encourage this vocation and do more to bring all believers to this mission. As bishops, we do not endorse or oppose candidates. Rather, we seek to form the consciences of our people so that they can examine the positions of candidates and make choices based on Catholic moral and social teaching." (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Catholics in Political Life)

When we advocate for the principles that we, as Catholics, hold dearly persistence is necessary to realize success. Always. The U.S. Bishops dedicated great effort to health care reform and have been tireless advocates *for more than half a century*.

Many of us were encouraged that with a new President and a new Congress that we finally see immigration reform that was just and workable. Two years later and still no sign of pending legislation and debate. But we must persist.

The Earth's fragile atmosphere, dying species, suffering populations in Third World Countries, rapidly diminishing resources, especially trees, water, soil and air, necessitate a serious climate bill. For over a decade creation has cried out for protection through a climate change bill and still there is no sign of pending legislation or debate. But we must persist.

Thirteen years ago the Oregon Catholic Church held prayer vigils to defeat the Death with Dignity Act. The Act still passed but as Catholics we must not give up hope that through prayer and effort that this law will one day be overturned. We must persist.

Sundays readings remind us that God listens to those "who call out to day and night." We are reminded of the need to pray constantly, to engage tirelessly in our efforts, and to persist without complaint. Then we will realize God's justice.

(Readings for 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time)



Office of Life, Justice, and Peace