

Prayer in Action

Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing to you, oh God, please be seated.

Before going to seminary, I worked in Higher Education. I was an administrator, but I also advised the Queer and Trans student group on campus. Working with those students brought a great deal of joy to my life and taught me a lot, not only about my own identity but kept me current on culture and what was really going on in student

lives. One of the big issues that I was helping them advocate for was gender-inclusive restrooms on campus. There were several single-stall bathrooms and one multi-stall restroom on campus that could easily be updated with a simple sign swap and a little education. All they had to do was convince the powers that be to approve it. They had funding and everything. Meeting after meeting, they kept getting denied. But they stayed after it and finally got their approval after staging a not so small protest outside the

administrative offices of the campus leadership. They knew their voices needed to be heard, and they partnered with some other student groups on campus to make it happen. Their persistence in action was inspiring and reminded me of our text for today.

In our gospel text for today, Luke's gospel again invites us to a deeper understanding of prayer. In this text, Jesus teaches the disciples about the persistence of prayer and the importance of active faith. In this text, Jesus shares a

parable about a persistent widow and an unjust judge. I want to set the scene a little for you. While we don't know a lot about this widow, it is possible that she may have been poor and the only one able to advocate for her own justice.

They are in an unknown city, and we don't know what offense the widow is seeking justice for. At first, the judge refuses her justice. But the widow keeps after him, day and night. But in an act of self-preservation, the judge finally grants

her justice. Her tenacity and persistence become her prayer.

Jesus ends the parable asking, “When the son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?” I don’t think Jesus is asking a question about the future Average Sunday Attendance on a given Sunday here. Or about how many buildings will be built in his name. I think Jesus is asking about the kind of justice the widow received. Will there be people of active faith who pray with their actions and words engaged in faith communities?

I think this is what our gospel text is calling us to this week. To be the widow unrelenting until justice is done, not only for ourselves but for everyone who asks for us to stand in solidarity with them.

It is so important for us to consider how we carry our faith with us. Similar to the students who staged their protest to ensure safe bathrooms for all. Not all of them needed those spaces, but they all showed up for each other.

I think sometimes we get caught up in thinking too big and that feels so

overwhelming. I know I get caught in that sometimes. Yet when we remember that some of the simplest actions can have the biggest impacts, it can feel more manageable. That student who showed up to something that was already planned. Things like saying a brief silent prayer before you eat. Talking about coming to church when people ask about your weekend plans. Offering to pray for someone or add them to the prayer list if they share, they are having a tough time.

Maybe it's a new way of engaging in social justice for you.

Last week the Bishop talked about the third space, a space we often feel a little uncomfortable. I'm wondering if you might feel ok venturing into that space with me today with a little interactive sermon time. Yeah? Great.

What I'd like for you to do is with the folks around you and for those of you at home feel free to use the folks around you as well. If you are on your

own that's ok just sit and ponder on your own.

What are some things you can do to take your faith or prayer into the world with you this week? Take a minute or two then you'll share back with the group.

Group sharing time

Thank you so much for your generous participation! I hope that you will take the suggestions you've heard and utilize

them this week and share with me and each other how it went.

Knowing that all we do in faith is our prayer in action just as the persistence of the widow was hers. Even when we are tired and weary, God will always hear our prayers, walk alongside us, and be with us. I find it helpful to remember that our faithful action may be the response to someone else's prayer. Maybe you find that helpful too. One of the many mysteries of and in faith is that it is ultimately not up to us to have the

answers but to stay in the conversation with God and each other through prayer. My prayer for us all is that we can take our faith out into the world, knowing God is always with us with hopeful hearts to be a prayerful presence for all we encounter. **Amen**