

Wednesday Reflection

Title: A Strong Woman

Date: October 19, 2025

ID: 29th Sunday of the Year (C Cycle)

Scripture: Luke 18:1-8

WR mean Wednesday Reflection on this website. *SH* mean Sunday Homily. *FSS* is my book *For Us and For our Salvation. Gaudium et Spes* is online; simply google it.

Text: The parable of the persistent widow is amusing and challenging. Proper interpretation requires the context in Luke's Gospel and a sense of the culture.

The ending of chapter 17 verses 20-37 is on the end-time, the conclusive establishment of God's Kingdom and the coming of the Son of Man. We should forget the nonsense hurled at us about the end-time. Here's what Jesus says: "The coming of the Son of Man cannot be observed and no one will announce 'Look, here it is' or 'There it is.' For behold, the Kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17: 20-21). Some have translated *among you* as *within you*. The Eucharistic church knows Christ is among/within us.

The problem Jesus sees is indifference. Believers continue "eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building" (Luke 17:29). As an antidote, we are commanded to "pray always" (Luke 18:1). Prayer increases our awareness and inspires us to action. Recall the parable of the poor man at the gate (Luke 16:19-31, see WR and SH for the 26th Sunday, *Whose At the Door?*).

The family structure of ancient Israel was problematic. The injustice was the patriarchal family, men's oppressive control of women (see FFS pp 20, 65ff, 112ff). A widow was in a precarious position. When her husband died, she needed a brother or son to oversee her life. This strong woman demands justice. Justice can be defined as having the means for a good and decent life. Society did not allow any woman such means. Jesus must have evoked nervous laughter when the judge admits his fear (Luke 18:5). Jesus knew strong women could emerge even in an unjust situation—his mother, for instance.

This parable reflects Luke's important theme of the great reversal. Mary announces it before Jesus is born (Luke 1:46-55). Zechariah proclaims it when the Baptist is born (Luke 1:68-79). Simeon prays about it on the Lord's first visit to the Temple (Luke 2:25-38). We must recall, however, what Jesus says about the Kingdom; it is among/within us. The parable notes the reversal; the faith-filled energy is within the widow.

The struggle for social/biblical justice is integral to our faith. The Vatican Council demands it (see *Guadium et Spes* chapter 2 especially paragraph 26.) The Catechism affirms it (see paragraphs 1905ff on the common good and 1928ff on social justice). Even more basic are the cries of the prophets (for example, Amos 2:6-8; 5:7-17; and 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:10-17; 3:13-15; and 10:1-4; Jeremiah 7:3-7; and 22:13-17; Micah 6:8).

The parable ends with a challenging question. When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth? Here, faith is a power in us needed to anticipate God's Kingdom by working for social/biblical justice.