

TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR C)**Start of World Mission Week 2025**

Ex 17:8-13; Ps 121; 2Tm 3:14-4:2; Lk 18:1-8

COMMENTARY (Meditations by Pierre Diarra¹)

All Scripture is inspired by God. It reveals to us the true face of God and of the human being. Let us first look at this beautiful word and its meaning for us today. We will then see how this word refers us to the saviour Jesus and to our missionary commitment.

All Scripture is inspired by God; it is useful for teaching, denouncing evil, correcting, educating in justice. Then as now, it is useful for knowing God and for improving our relationship with him. It can lead us back to theological disputes of the past and to explanations that are not always simple. The questions that are asked are: How is Scripture inspired? How does God go about inspiring the writers throughout the history of the chosen people, but also after the death and resurrection of Jesus? How does God do it? How did he influence the Prophets, and how does a religious writing become sacred and normative? Even if it is a different register, let us think of artistic inspiration, with its unexpected, spontaneous, occasional character. Let us also think of inspiration in the vast domain of religions and sacred texts. Let us simply note that the Holy Spirit confers on sacred writers a supernatural force that pushes them and determines them to write. The Spirit influences them, inspires them, assists them, so that they write without error. It is not easy to know exactly how God proceeds, but it is understandable that there is a divine author and a human author, and it is the action of the latter that explains the historical and individual originality of each of the sacred works, the differences and even the various theological conceptions, with their evolution and articulation.

To explain that the same book can have several authors, one appeals to the doctrine of the relationship between *principal and instrumental causes*, as explained by Pius XII in the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*. God is the *primary author* of Scripture, i.e., the principal cause, while man plays the role of an instrumental cause. But the human “instrument” is more than a scribe, for he must be recognised as an intelligent and free subject. God expresses himself through him, but he remains the human author. Has the Spirit not been given in abundance, especially for us Christians (Rom 5:5)? Hope does not deceive, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us! Of course, it is not a question of dictation, in the modern sense of the word, but God is the author of the whole sacred text. For Catholics, the faith of the original Church is committed as the basis and permanent rules of faith throughout the centuries, hence the conclusion of ‘Revelation’ with the death of the Apostles or the end of the apostolic age, or the original Church. Through the Magisterium and the faith of the Church, the people of God can discern and understand more and more the meaning of the Scriptures, knowing that the Church is bound to this Word as well as to the first and constitutive period of her history, shaped by God himself in Christ.

Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture are closely related and communicate with each other. For both, springing from the same divine source, form, so to speak, a single whole and tend to the same end, as the Second Vatican Council explained in *Dei Verbum* (no. 9). Tradition, Scripture, the people of God and the Magisterium should be linked, especially in the interpretation of Scripture, theology, and the life of the Church in different contexts. In this way we understand better how the Word of God travels to the ends of the earth. We understand better how the Word is welcomed and glorified and how it fills the hearts of human beings more and more, in connection with the Eucharist, the sacraments and the veneration of the Word of God. It is the Holy Spirit who prepares hearts and cultures to welcome the Word, Jesus, the Christ.

¹ We offer for this Sunday the meditation of Prof. Pierre Diarra of PMU France, taking the opportunity to thank him again sincerely for this text.

Then as now, Scripture is useful for teaching, denouncing evil, correcting, educating in justice, but above all for knowing who God is and who Man is. We can only really understand them by linking them together. From Adam to Jesus, what does the Bible tell us about the human person? How can we characterise humanity properly, if not by linking it to the Creator? Does not the inspired text testify above all to an irremissible hope in the greatness of the human being, which makes the totality of God's children's brothers and sisters bound by a thirst for love, justice, and authentic communion, rooted in God, our Father? The word of God is a divine force for the salvation of every believer, of every human being. The Word of God "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, which, as the only Son, full of grace and truth, he has from the Father" (Jn 1:14). (Jn 1:14) Christ established the reign of God on earth; by his actions and words, he revealed his Father and himself. He also revealed the Man, for he is the God-Man. By his death, his resurrection, his glorious ascension and by the sending of the Spirit, he has completed his work. From now on, he draws all men to himself (Jn 12:32), for he alone has the words of eternal life (Jn 6:68). We are invited, following the apostles and the many witnesses of the Risen One, to preach the Gospel, to propose to our contemporaries the faith in Jesus, the Christ, and the Lord, so that they may join the Church and form with the other disciples the body of Christ.

Let us pray without respite so that the Word of God may be welcomed, that it may be useful in denouncing evil, in correcting, in educating in justice and in forming communities rooted in love. Let us pray without ceasing, like the widow who, by her insistence and constancy, began to annoy the judge who did not fear God and did not respect men. God, Our Father, listens to us and hears us. But the question remains: will the Son of Man, when he comes, find faith on earth? It depends on our witness and our missionary commitment. It also depends on people and their freedom when Jesus Christ is announced to them. It also depends on their docility to the Spirit. May the Spirit give us the strength to continue the mission, against all odds. The Lord is our help. He will keep us from all evil. He stands by each of us. He gives us life and strength; let us pray that he will increase our strength of witness. He will guard us, both when we leave for the mission and when we return. He watches over us now and forever. Let us pray that the Lord will send labourers into his harvest and that our missionary commitment in the Church will bear fruit. May love and justice, peace, and hope advance in the world.

Useful points to consider:

POPE LEO XIV, Address, Jubilee of Justice, Saint Peter's Square, Saturday, 20 September 2025

[...] Tradition teaches us that justice is, first and foremost, a virtue, that is, a firm and stable attitude that orders our conduct according to reason and faith (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1804). The virtue of justice, in particular, consists in the "constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor" (ibid., 1807). In this perspective, for the believer, justice calls us "to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good" (ibid.). Its aim is to guarantee an order that protects the weak – those who seek justice because they have been oppressed, excluded or ignored.

There are many examples in the Gospels in which human actions are measured by a justice that can overcome the evil of abuse. For instance, there is the persistence of the widow who urges the judge to recover his sense of justice (cf. *Lk* 18:1-8). There is also a higher justice that pays the worker of the last hour as much as the one who works all day (cf. *Mt* 20:1-16); a justice that makes mercy the key to understanding relationships and leads us to forgiveness, welcoming the son who was lost and has been found (cf. *Lk* 15:11-32); and even more, a justice that calls us to forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven (cf. *Mt* 18:21-35). It is this power of forgiveness, intrinsic to the commandment of love, that emerges as a constitutive element of a justice capable of combining the supernatural with the human.

Evangelical justice, therefore, does not take away from human justice, but challenges and refines it. It prompts human justice to go ever further, impelling it towards the pursuit of reconciliation. Evil, in fact, must not only be punished but also repaired, and to this end, it is necessary to look deeply at the well-being of individuals and the common good. This task is arduous, but not impossible for those who, aware of performing a service that is more demanding than others, are committed to leading an irreproachable life. [...]

POPE FRANCIS, *Angelus*, St Peter's Square, Sunday, 20 October 2013

“Crying day and night” to God! This image of prayer is striking, but let us ask ourselves: Why does God want this? Doesn’t he already know what we need? What does it mean to “insist” with God?

This is a good question that makes us examine an important aspect of the faith: God invites us to pray insistently not because he is unaware of our needs or because he is not listening to us. On the contrary, he is always listening and he knows everything about us lovingly. On our daily journey, especially in times of difficulty, in the battle against the evil that is outside and within us, the Lord is not far away, he is by our side. We battle with him beside us, and our weapon is prayer which makes us feel his presence beside us, his mercy and also his help. But the battle against evil is a long and hard one; it requires patience and endurance, like Moses who had to keep his arms outstretched for the people to prevail (cf Ex 17:8-13). This is how it is: there is a battle to be waged each day, but God is our ally, faith in him is our strength and prayer is the expression of this faith. Therefore Jesus assures us of the victory, but at the end he asks: “when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (Lk 18:8). If faith is snuffed out, prayer is snuffed out, and we walk in the dark. We become lost on the path of life.

POPE FRANCIS, *Angelus*, St Peter’s Square, Sunday, 20 October 2019

To live mission in full there is an indispensable condition: prayer, fervent and unceasing prayer, according to Jesus’ teaching, also proclaimed in today’s Gospel, in which he recounted a parable on the need “always to pray and not lose heart” (Lk 18:1). Prayer is the first support of the People of God for missionaries, rich in affection and gratitude for their difficult task of proclaiming and offering the light and grace of the Gospel to those who have not yet received it. It is also a fine occasion to ask ourselves today: do I pray for missionaries? Do I pray for those who go afar to bear the Word of God through witness? Let us think about this.

BENEDICT XVI, Eucharistic Celebration, *Homily*, Piazza del Plebiscito (Naples), Sunday, 21 October 2007

The power that changes the world and transforms it into the Kingdom of God, in silence and without fanfare, is faith - and prayer is the expression of faith. When faith is filled with love for God, recognized as a good and just Father, prayer becomes persevering, insistent, it becomes a groan of the spirit, a cry of the soul that penetrates God's Heart. Thus, prayer becomes the greatest transforming power in the world. In the face of a difficult and complex social reality, [...], it is essential to strengthen hope which is based on faith and expressed in unflagging prayer. It is prayer that keeps the torch of faith alight. Jesus asks, as we heard at the end of the Gospel: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk 18: 8). It is a question that makes us think. What will be our answer to this disturbing question? Today, let us repeat together with humble courage: Lord, in coming among us at this Sunday celebration you find us gathered together with the lamp of faith lit. We believe and trust in you! Increase our faith!