

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given on October 17, 2010
Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Liturgical Year C

As many of you know, I am the proud uncle to three nephews and a niece with whom I have built individual relationships. I remember when they were smaller, Michael would badger me with many questions, while Matthew did...nothing...and it was harder to engage with him. I had to learn to tame one and invite the other. Thus, I learned about them and they about me, and our relationships have grown.

Back when I was in seminary, Bob Sullivan was a classmate of mine. He was a Harvard Ph.D. and a Vietnam veteran with a very stern image. We had nothing in common—or so it seemed. One summer, we were assigned to field education together. Between that and experiencing seminary life together, we were forced to deal with one another and our differences, and a lifelong friendship emerged.

Today's Gospel passage is about prayer. Prayer requires persistence. Christ tells his disciples a parable so that they may learn the importance of praying always without becoming weary. Prayer can sometimes seem a means to an end, but it is also an end in itself. In prayer, we develop a relationship with Christ. Just as it took time for me to learn about my nephews' personalities and to build a friendship with Bob Sullivan, it takes time and persistence to get to know Christ.

This past Tuesday, October 15, was the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, a Doctor of the Church and one of the greatest spiritual writers of all time. When reading her works, I often find pithy statements which strike me by their depth and wisdom. Here are a few of my favorites on prayer:

- “Prayer is nothing else than having a friendship with the Lord.”
- “Lord, if this is the way you treat your friends, it's no wonder you have so few!” (This is one of her most famous quotes, which shows the good saint had a sense of humor!)
- “There are more tears shed over answered prayers than over unanswered prayers.”
- “Prayer and comfortable living are incompatible.” (Because prayer changes us.)