

## Read Luke 18:1-8

Remember that old bumper sticker: "**If you aren't appalled you aren't paying attention**"? What exactly is appalling is not specified. I guess there is enough to go around for anyone who's paying attention. **Seriously folks:** these are dangerous times: reckless rhetoric and threats of violence undermine the common good. What's sad is that this very old bumper sticker could have been written yesterday.

Honestly, bumper sticker across my heart reads, "**If you aren't sad, you aren't paying attention.**" Discouragement is this feeling that comes over me against my will: *'here I am again fretting over the ways things are and how they most certainly will be in the future if things continue to go the way they been'*. It's the sense that nothing seems to make a difference. (Although I know this is not true.) Sadness sets its hooks in me when I take stock of the shape this world is in and no amount of political blather or religious clichés can convince me that anything will improve. One need not be a partisan to be discouraged with the social upheaval and deep divisions across every sector, including most sadly, the Church.

In this parable there are two characters: a poor widow and a tough judge. The widow, already in a powerless position because she has no husband is also the victim of some particular injustice. She could have simply accepted her circumstances and given up. What could she do anyway against a judge who could care less about her plight? But she refused to give in. You get the impression that this widow would continue crying out for as long as it took to get justice.

I went looking for someone persistent, really persistent. Remember Malala Yousafzai? She is the teenager known as the fierce advocate for girls education who took on the Taliban from her small town of Minora in the Swat Valley district of Pakistan. She simply and courageously refused to take no for answer when it came to the educational needs of girls. She began at 11 years old with a blog post and kept on speaking, even when told to shut up and go away. Even when the Taliban put a bullet in her head she survived and now keeps on speaking up for the girls all over the world. When she was 17 she received the Nobel Peace Prize. She is only 19, one gets the hopeful sense that one day her relentless cry for justice for girls will win the day; even if, we must be honest, she dies in the process. It's her tenacious courage that reminds us of the widow in Jesus' parable. She is still demanding girls get a proper education.

So, Jesus poses a question "if an unjust judge does this, will not God, who loves justice and mercy, bring justice on the last day?" He makes the assertion that God's justice has been settled. It may be 10 years, it may be 100 years, it may be in our lifetime or in our children's, children's lifetime, but the reign of God will come.

**The pressing question is whether there will be people who will follow the example of the faithful who persist in praying for the reign of God to come on earth with visible deeds of mercy and goodness?**