

Reflection for Sunday

[Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time]

November 17, 2021

The Book of Esther

When Queen Vashti refused the summon of the king, she lost her queenship. The king loved Esther best of all the maidens so she received the queenship (while hiding the fact that she was a Jew).

The point I wish to make is how Esther approached God with her petition to help her persuade the king not to destroy the Jewish nation.

She divested herself of her splendid garments, put on garments of distress and mourning. In place of her precious ointments she covered her head with dung and ashes. She afflicted her body severely and in place of her festive adornments, her tangled hair covered her. All this in preparation of prayer!

She prayed a very lengthy and earnest prayer for God to save her people. (See Chapter 3: verse 14-30).

The first step in our prayer to God should always be one of humility. A humble and contrite heart You will not scorn, oh God! [Psalm 51:19]

Saint Augustine in his letter to Proba quotes Psalm 27:4 “One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: To

dwell in the Lord’s house all the days of my life, to gaze on the Lord’s beauty, to visit his temple.”

This quote from the psalm has always been a favorite of mine. In fact, I want it used at my funeral.

To pray without ceasing means: Desire unceasingly that life of happiness which is nothing if not eternal, and ask it of him who alone is able to give it.

I have always been puzzled about the requirement to pray without ceasing. We make things so complicated! It simply means to desire and love God and strive for holiness of life that we may gain heaven.