

## **FR HUGH'S HOMILY FOR 29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

I love the characters in parables that Luke tells us.

There is a widow here, at the bottom of society, who needs the judge to give her what she is due, probably just to survive.

Picture the scene. A crowded court area, male lawyers milling around with their clients, she is probably the only woman, and she has to push her way forward to be heard and then has to make herself heard. Many of the others probably laughing at her as she cannot win, she has no money to bribe the judge with.

But she forces herself to have the courage to stand there in front of the court and not only that, but to keep going back until there is a response.

She is a perfect example of what a disciple of Jesus is going to need to be. She has courage and is ready to speak out.

She believes completely in her cause.

And she believes that if she keeps speaking the truth then she will be able to change the heart of the judge.

However powerful he may be and however hopeless her cause she persists until that conversion of heart takes place.

Two simple messages for us here. The first is to do with our world and how it works and justice within it. Luke is convinced that Jesus' message is not only for salvation in the world to come, but that we are here to help build that kingdom now, and justice is a central part of that. It is vital that we have that courage to speak out, or help people speak out (and you can see that happening in the local Poverty Commissions here and elsewhere where they help the poor find a voice and engage with those in local positions of power.)

Together with this is the call to us to have faith. Faith in the message of Jesus Christ, faith in the power he gives us to speak this message to others, and faith in its power of conversion, that we can change the hearts of others and help them hear and understand the wonder of the message we have. We are timid, but like the widow we need to trust and persist.

The last question is addressed to us and all listeners. Will he find any faith on earth? Yes, if we have the widow's belief and courage.