

Father Terry writes:

It's an odd picture of God if we think of him as someone who has to be persuaded, rather like the wheedling tactics of Abraham in our first reading (Genesis 18.20-22). This picture of God as open to bargaining seems rather odd to us. Surely, we think, God saw through Abraham? Well, yes. That is part of the meaning of the passage. It is laced with humour. We are meant to understand that all the time Abraham was trying his salami tactics, God saw through him. God still listened to him and granted his request (but alas, in the end there were no just people to be found). The message is that God is prepared to be involved with us. Prayer is often messy. There are distractions. We bring to God this and that and then our mind wanders and we come back and meditate on God's love then we think about the state of the world and worry about it and bring this to God before our mind wanders again ... we are rather like Abraham coming back to God again and again. Yet God, the eternal, the infinite, the all-knowing and loving God is still there, listening to us, drawing our prayers into his purposes. We have to persevere in coming back to God again and again.

Persistence is the key to many things in life. If you want to run a marathon, you had better be prepared to spend many hours pounding the tarmac beforehand. If you want to learn another language, you accept that you will be battling with vocabulary and grammatical structures and pronunciation for a long time. And it doesn't stop sometimes even when you achieve what you set out to do: for example, highly trained professional musicians still hone their skills with daily practice. Often what seems to us to be effortless performance is preceded by many hours of rehearsal. Persistence pays off. This is part of the message of our first reading, and it emerges even more strongly in our gospel today (Luke 11.1-13). As with the story from Genesis about Abraham, at first look the gospel may seem to give a strange picture of God. Surely, we might think, we do not have to nag God? The answer is there in the gospel. Of course we do not have to nag God. Part of the intention of the parable is to contrast human reactions and divine response. Jesus is telling us that if human beings, imperfect as they are, will ultimately respond generously, how much more generously will God respond, he who is perfect love.

At the same time, we have to understand that prayer does involve commitment. In the famous trilogy 'Ask ... seek ... knock' the middle term 'search' implies perseverance. We may set out in prayer not knowing where it will lead us or what will be asked of us. Prayer will require not only perseverance, but it will also be a journey of discovery. Will all prayer be answered? Yes, but not necessarily by giving us what we ask. Have a look again at what Jesus says at the end of today's gospel: 'God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.' Some prayers will be answered in a form that the petitioner will recognize, some will not. But to all who pray the strengthening, inspiring, encouraging Holy Spirit will be given by God. That is an answer to prayer. Many people go to Lourdes seeking healing. Some are cured. All return home stronger in spirit.

Holy Trinity Catholic Church

41 Brook Green, London W6 7BL

Tel: 0207 603 3832 Fax: 0207 603 0511

Website: www.holytrinityw6.org email: brookgreen@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Team: Fr Terry Tastard (Parish Priest); Fr James Neal;

Sister Jenefer Glencross OSU (Catechetics Co-ordinator);

Fr Nizar Semaan (in residence). Parish Administrator: Mrs Anja Huynh

17th Sunday of the year (Year C)

25th July 2010

Today's Readings pp 281-285 St. Paul's Missal



SERVICE TIMES

**Saturday Vigil Mass 6 pm; Sunday at 8.30 am, 10 am, 11.30 and 6 pm
1 pm (Syriac Rite, in Arabic and Aramaic)**

Weekdays: Mass daily 9.30 am & 6 pm Benediction: Sat. 5-5.40 pm

Confession: Saturday 10-10.30 am and 5.15-5.45 pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 10am-1pm and 2pm-4pm