29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2013

THEME: PRAYER – PLEASE TRY AGAIN

READINGS: Exodus 17:8-12/ 2 Tim. 3:14 - 4:2/ Luke 18:1-8

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

We are familiar with the experience of making a phone call and, instead of hearing the voice of the friend we are calling, we hear a recorded message: ‘The person you are calling has not answered; ***please try again*** later.’ Beloved, if for the past months or several years your prayers for a job, marriage, success, healing, peace of mind, spiritual renewal, etc. have not been answered, ***please try to pray again and again***.

In today’s first reading, Moses (the great man of God) who was used to God’s ***prompt*** answers to his prayers, learnt to persevere in prayer for Israel’s final victory over the Amalekites. Earlier on, at the burning bush experience when Moses requested for a sign that God would be with him in Egypt, God asked him to drop his rod (staff) and ***immediately*** it turned into a snake (Ex. 4). Secondly, before the Red Sea, when he stretched his hand over the sea, a way was ***instantly*** created (Ex. 14). And so when the people were thirsty and God asked Moses to strike the rock with his rod, ***he expected an instant miracle***; but when this did not happen, he lost his patience (Ex. 17:1-7). Not long after this incident, the Israelites had to battle with the Amalekites. Moses expected that (as he did over the Red Sea) just raising his hands with the rod in prayer would bring ***instant*** victory, but that was not to be. He had to persevere in prayer – and Aaron and Hur had to assist to raise the hands of the 80-year+ old man – for ultimate victory (Ex. 17:8-12). In other words, Moses eventually learnt that ***sometimes one has to pray again and again*** before his/her prayers are answered.

Jesus gives us a similar message of perseverance in prayer by the parable of a widow who ***repeatedly*** demanded justice from a judge. Eventually her request was granted (Lk. 18:1-8). Beloved, let us not give up when our ***prayer-calls*** to God are not immediately answered, and the recorded ‘heavenly voice’ seems to say: ‘The Lord you are calling has not answered; ***please try again*** later.’ In that case, let us heed the ‘heavenly voice’, and try again and again, but never give up! We have had the experience of almost giving up after phoning a friend several times, but then we decided to call again, and this time we were answered; so let us keep making our ***prayer-calls*** to God – for He will certainly answer!

When we find praying alone very tough, we can learn from how Moses was assisted. When he was tired in raising his hands in prayer, Aaron (the priest) and Hur assisted him. Sometimes when we are tempted to give up in prayer, we may ask our priest, family or friend to support us. Secondly, they provided a seat for Moses. So similarly, we may use other things to aid our prayers: for instance, a CD with prayers we can pray along, or with songs we can sing along.

As you persevere in prayer for that job, marriage, success, healing, peace of mind, spiritual renewal, etc. may the Lord eventually answer your prayers, amen!