

Homily. 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. C. 23/24 July 2022.

On Wednesday 20th July we marked the anniversary of the landing of Apollo 11 on the Moon. I recall that as a young boy I watched this historic event with Mum at home on our then very modern black and white TV. Over several days we were able to see Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin land and later walk upon the Moon's surface. We followed this great journey until they, along with Michael Collins in the Command Module, finally came home splashing down in the North Pacific Ocean on 24th July. This achievement took much persistence and consistency, along with skill, courage and focus to overcome all of the odds against them.

We know that some people aren't naturally blessed with these gifts. They have to work hard to develop their persistence and consistency, their focused determination and fidelity. Even for those who are blessed with these qualities it still takes a lot of time and effort to apply them, as recent years have proven to us over and over again. What we also know though, is that without these qualities many of the best things in life are missed and that this loss adversely affects our society and all of us.

Abraham showed his persistence and consistency during his long prayerful conversation and bargaining with God. He did this not for himself, but for the lives of enemies and strangers. Likewise, Jesus urges us to be persistent and consistent in our prayer to God. We have to be both determined and faithful in our praying, never giving up as we ask, seek and knock until we receive, find and have the door opened to us. Again this praying is for others, as in the story of the man who needed bread to feed his late night unexpected visitor. God is our neighbour, our

other friend with this needed food. If God seems to us to be slow to respond, then our faithful determination will do the trick. But, Jesus adds, God always wants to help us, readily offering the best gift of all, God's own Holy Spirit; God's own heart and life if we but ask, seek and knock.

This all happened while Jesus was praying and in response to His disciples request that He teach them to pray. He gave them, and through them gave us, the Lord's Prayer, a pattern for how we are to pray. It is focused on what God does for us, what God wants for us, and on our response to God's goodness and grace, our forgiveness of each other which when it happens a true work of the Holy Spirit acting within us.

These times of ours continue to be demanding and challenging. Any change of eras always is, and this is surely one historic such time. Now our prayer is essential, a prayerfulness like Christ's, like the one He practiced, showed and taught to His followers. Making use of our qualities of faithful consistency and persistent 'stick at it' determination is what will take us to God and then bring us safely home to solid earth, just as was the case with that flimsy tin can which 53 years ago took 3 men to the Moon and brought them safely back to our living blue and green planet.