

Homily for 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A passenger in a taxi leaned over to ask the driver a question. He tapped him on the shoulder. The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove up the curb, and stopped just inches from a large plate glass window.

For a few minutes everything was silent in the cab, and then the still shaking taxi driver said: “I’m sorry but you scared the daylights out of me.”

The terrified passenger apologized and said he didn’t realize a mere tap on the shoulder could frighten him so much.

The driver replied; “No, no, I’m sorry. It’s my fault. Today is my first day driving a cab...for the last twenty-five years I’ve been driving a hearse.”

I bet we all know how the taxi cab driver felt for at sometime in our lives we have been all “tapped on the shoulder.” Maybe it happened when we faced a health crisis: a heart attack, a diagnosis of cancer, the death of a loved one, a crisis within a marriage or the disintegration of a marriage...the list of taps on the shoulder could be endless.

The readings this weekend speak to those moments when life pulls the rug out from under us and we are not sure in what direction to

turn and how to move forward. For the readings today are not so much about teaching us how to pray but, more importantly, how attentive God is to our prayers. Sometimes that attentiveness comes to us in strange and unexpected ways. Sometimes the crisis we live through becomes the source of unexpected blessings and a surge of love that we simply didn't expect and which overwhelms us. Our life is a precious gift that God gives to us. And God never abandons us. Rather God hears our prayers. God's promise is found in the experience of Abraham who discovers God's mercy and compassion in response to his prayers. And God's promise is found in the words of Jesus who says:

“Ask, and it will be given to you;
search, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened to you.”

It's not a promise to do what we want...for after all, God is not our servant. Rather it is promise to be there for us and to guide us in ways that we could not even imagine. And God always keeps a promise.