

She Wouldn't Let Harpo Rest

Some of us – especially we older people – remember the Marx Brothers. The family comedy act was successful in vaudeville, on Broadway and in motion pictures from 1905 to 1949.

Five of the Marx Brothers' 13 feature films were selected by the American Film Institute as among the top 100 comedy films, and two of them – *Duck Soup* and *A Night at the Opera* – placed in the top 12.

The brothers are almost universally known today by their stage names: Chico, Harpo, Groucho, Gummo and Zeppo Marx. Harpo and Chico retired after 1949, while Groucho began a second career in television. Gummo and Zeppo eventually left the act to pursue business careers.

On a visit to New York, Harpo was bombarded by requests from various charities to appear at their benefits. After one particularly persistent woman had called him a dozen times in two days, Harpo reluctantly agreed to appear at an event for her charity. She offered to personally escort him to the event.

As they were leaving Harpo's hotel room, the telephone began to ring. "Don't you want to go back and answer it?" she asked.

"Why bother?" Harpo replied wearily. "It's undoubtedly you again."

The story evokes a spiritual lesson.

A Canaanite woman begged Jesus to cure her daughter, who she believed was troubled by a demon. Jesus seems to ignore her plea. But she doesn't give up. She keeps asking Jesus for His help. Finally, due to her persistence, Jesus cured her daughter.

We should be like the woman who pestered Jesus, or the woman who stayed after Harpo Marx.

One fellow, I read recently, liked to say: "Pray like a pest. Give Jesus no rest!"

Not only is persistence good advice in one's prayer life, but it also obtains positive results in pursuit of one's dreams, both on personal and professional levels.

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To persist, according to *Merriam Webster*, is “to go on resolutely or stubbornly in spite of opposition, importunity or warning; to remain unchanged or fixed in a specified character, condition or position.”

Calvin Coolidge, the 30th President of the United States, said: “Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”

Consider the response of Jesus to the Canaanite woman:

“Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment (Matthew 15:28).

– Beecher Hunter