Doing Your Best
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Many years ago in a textile factory there was a sign on the wall, which read: "If your threads get tangled, send for the foreman." One woman who was fairly new was a diligent worker, but her threads got tangled one day. She tried to disentangle them, but her efforts only made matters worse. Finally she gave up and called the foreman. He came and looked for a few moments and then asked: "You have been trying to untangle them yourself, haven't you?" "Yes," she replied. "Why didn't you send for me, according to the instruction?" She shrugged her shoulders and said: "I did my best." With much tact, yet, with great insight, he quietly said: "Remember that doing your best is sending for me."

How often in life have we tried to straighten out our own messes, only to make things worse, and certainly not to solve things? We think that a little more human effort, a bit more human wisdom, and a touch of human ingenuity are the solution. But mankind in general and individuals in particular tend to make the same mistakes over and over again. Bad habits remain in place. Errors are repeated. We may even excuse our conduct by saying: "I did my best." Then God gently, yet firmly, reminds us: "Doing your best is calling for me."

Paul did the best that he could do, but it was not good enough. He mused: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.... Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:15-24). But Paul had learned that to call on the name of Jesus was the best he could do and the solution to his problem (Rom. 10:9-13).