

## XV TRINITY 2016

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

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Jesus tells us we shouldn't spend so much time worrying...especially about things we have little or no control over...like tomorrow! We have enough things to keep us busy today...and those are the things we need to focus on.

Another thing to think about is when we spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about what is going to happen tomorrow...or next week...or next year...we miss out on opportunities to enjoy the things of today.

There is a difference between excessive worry about things and planning for our future. Company retirement plans are designed to help us save money for retirement or take our long dreamed about around-the-world cruise. Planning for the future means using God's gifts now wisely.

This morning's Gospel is from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus begins by saying we cannot serve two masters...we cannot serve both God and **mammon**...one or the other has to give. Jesus says we will hate one and love the other.

The word **mammon** comes from a Greek word that means **wealth, money** or **material possessions**. **Mammon** may also mean **that in which we place our trust**. Money and material possessions are not bad things. They are gifts from God. The question Jesus asks us to consider is in whom...or what...do we place our trust.

Jesus told the crowd who had come to hear him to take a look at the flowers growing around them on the hillside...take a look at the birds flying in the air. God provides the sun and rain the flowers need to grow and they produce the seeds the birds need for food.

We can all agree the natural beauty of the world is a testimony to God's awesome power. But Jesus tells us as beautiful as flowers and birds are, human beings are worth more and God takes care of our needs. We should not repay his love and care with worry and anxiety! That means we don't trust him.

Even King Solomon and all of his riches could not match the beauty and order in God's creation in how he provides for flowers and birds. Solomon was King of a united Israel and lived in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century BC. He was known for his incredible wealth...and for his wisdom.

What do we mean when we say we trust in God to take care of our needs? It means using the resources God has provided for us...like income from our work or retirement plans...wisely and correctly...to take care of our obligations so we don't have to worry. It means being good stewards of our gifts. And it means not spending money we don't have.

When we refuse to use the resources God has provided...by not paying rent or car insurance or taxes...and saying to ourselves..."God will work it out for me"...we are not trusting him to make things right...we are testing him...demanding he do something to prove himself to us.

Jesus found himself in this position while he was in the desert praying. He was hungry...he wanted food...the Devil told him to turn stones into bread. We know the way the story turns out...Jesus told the Devil to go away and quit bothering him...he would not test God by doing magic. He trusted God to take care of his needs.

We often worry about things when we shouldn't. Jesus asks us if spending so much time worrying about things is beneficial? Can worrying cause us to live longer? Probably not! In fact, the opposite is more likely to happen. Excessive worry can shorten our lives considerably.

Jesus concludes his short sermon about worry by telling us not to worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. We do not need to add to the troubles each day brings.

There is nothing pessimistic in what Jesus is saying. He is asking us to do what he does...trust in God to take care of our needs. The time to place our trust in God is now. Yesterday is gone...and it's too soon to worry about tomorrow!

