

XV TRINITY 2017

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

ST. MATTHEW 6.24-34



“The future is not in our hands...we have no power over it. We can act only today...we will allow the good God to make plans for the future – for yesterday is gone, tomorrow has not yet come and we have only today to make him known, loved and served. So we do not worry about the future.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Fear, anxiety and worry are problems we all deal with at one time or another during our lives. We get anxious about many things. We spend a lot of time worrying, quite often about things over which we have no control.

Jesus speaks many times about anxiety and worry. In the Sermon on the Mount he tells us we should not be anxious about our lives...he says that three times...and he specifically warns us not to worry about the future. Can any of us live any longer...Jesus asks us...by worrying about it?

God doesn't want us to worry needlessly but that doesn't mean we shouldn't prepare for the future and take care of everyday matters. Planning for the future by investing in retirement funds...for example...is using one of God's gifts...the money we earn from our work...wisely.

What God doesn't want is for us to worry about things over which we have no control. If we spend time worrying about what will happen tomorrow, or next week, or next month, or next year...we miss out on what is in our control...today's opportunities...as Mother Teresa said...to make God known, loved and served. And in answer to Jesus' question...worrying about the future might in fact shorten our lives!

We get anxious and worry about a lot of things: money, our health, loneliness, death, unemployment, the economy, the cost of living, civil strife, war, and natural disasters. The *Book of Common Prayer* contains many prayers that address things that are likely to cause us to worry. The common denominator in all of the prayers is trust in God. Needless worry is failure to trust God to care for us and provide us with what we need.

Jesus tells us it's not possible to serve both God and money. The word **Mammon** comes from a Greek word that means **wealth** or **money**...but it also means **that in which we place our trust**. Jesus is asking us where our trust lies...with God or in something or someone else?

Jesus is not saying money or material possessions are bad. Money is one of God's good gifts...so we can go out and buy the things we need...food, clothing, fuel for the car, and to pay the rent and mortgage. Jesus wants us to trust God like children trust their parents to take care of their needs now and in the future!

We hear Jesus' own words at every Mass...*“Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest”*...and in the Lord's Prayer we ask God to take care of our daily needs. Unnecessary and endless worry is indeed a heavy load we don't need to carry alone.

Jesus tells us that flowers growing in a field and birds flying in the air are beautiful. God takes care of them by providing the sun and rain the flowers need to grow and the seeds the birds need to thrive. As beautiful as flowers and birds are, human beings are worth more and God takes care of our needs. We should not repay God's love and care with worry and anxiety!

Today's Gospel is all about the positive effect trusting God will have on our lives, but we do have to do our part. Worrying gets us nowhere...trusting God gets us where we need to be...his children knowing he is taking care of us now and he will take care of us tomorrow and forever. God our Father is watching over us. He knows what we need even before we ask...so we should start enjoying life as God intended.

The gift God has given us to work with is today. We can learn from the mistakes we made yesterday and try not to repeat them. We will have more opportunities tomorrow to make God known and to serve him and love him!

It starts with trusting God. If we do that...we have no reason to worry about tomorrow or the next day...and every reason to be happy...today!

