

## 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday A (Matt 6:24-34)

Almost every morning, I skim the daily newspapers, and sometimes get depressed, and then I get more depressed as I later watch CNN or Fox News telling us about the many losses in peoples lives, and the violence and sadness that people face every day. No one goes through life without losses of various kinds. As I meet with engaged couples preparing them for marriage, and as I meet with the divorce support group I work with, and as I listen to people recount their life history and sometimes grieve when a loved one dies, I become deeply aware that nobody escapes a loss of some kind in their lives. As a result I find that the big fear in life is the fear of abandonment, the fear that someone will walk out of their life, forget them, and leave them alone.

How reassuring is the message from Isaiah, who speaks to us of our God who will never abandon us, as a mother would not abandon her infant, or be without tenderness for her child. Even if a mother would abandon her child," I will never forget you," says our loving God.

The fear of abandonment is perhaps only one of the fears and worries we may endure. Jesus in our Gospel tells us not to worry about our life, what the future may hold in our economically challenging world, in a world where human dignity is threatened and warfare is so prevalent, and unemployment touches so many people's lives, and medical care is so expensive, and the threat of expulsion from our country is so evident. What is Jesus trying to tell us in this Gospel? Jesus speaks to us of God's providence, that all of creation is in God's care, and nothing is beyond the reach of God's loving arms. We believe in a God who cares deeply, as a mother for her child, and we place our hope in the God who loves us passionately.

Jesus calls us to a detachment from material goods and a life of simplicity and dependence on God. Then Jesus exhorts his disciples to avoid unnecessary worries. Worry is a major issue for those who struggle with belief and trust in a loving and provident God. In nature, other creatures, like birds, work hard for their daily food, but they don't worry about tomorrow. Worry is useless because we can't increase even an inch of height by days of worrying, nor can we add a year to our life span. Worry is injurious to the health often causing physical and mental problems and illnesses. Worrisome stress can negatively affect us in so many injurious ways.

Jesus tells us to seek first the kingdom of God, a kingdom described as a condition where justice is practiced and experienced, where a deep interior peace envelops us, even in the midst of chaos and confusion, and where love prevails, an experience of the profound love our passionately loving God generously gives us, and which gracefully moves us to share with one another as our brothers and sisters. And for the great gift of Jesus in our lives we remember him with grateful hearts in the Eucharist as he asked us to do.

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