

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (*Matthew 6:27, 31-34*)

Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – Living life fully in the present moment, my priceless gift to God

Too much unnecessary baggage is a source of stress and worry. Our life is made up of a series of present moments. Each present moment is unique and is a gift from God. It comes with its challenges and trials, and accompanied by the graces needed to overcome them. When we are distracted from the present moment by worries about the uncertain future or regrets about the unhappy past, we are less able to utilize the graces provided in the present moment, which are wasted. Thus, God exhorts us not to worry but to deal fully with the present moment, using the power that is in God's grace. To cast aside the entrenched habit of worrying, we need to prioritize the most important things in our life. Are we taking on too much? Is it really necessary? Are we living in useless bondage to things of this earth, finding our joy and happiness in things that have no eternal value? Are we giving a disproportionate allocation of our precious time and resources to achieve things that will not withstand God's judgement on our last day? Unless God wills it, our human efforts are not going to give us much success or true pleasure or real fulfillment. *Unless the LORD build the house, they labor in vain who build. Unless the LORD guard the city, in vain does the guard keep watch (Psalm 127:1).*

Putting trust in our limited human power and not having enough faith and trust in God. Our weak faith leads us to rely blindly on our limited human capability, forgetting the power of God in His grace that is available to us. A consequence of this blind trust in ourselves is a constant worry whenever things do not turn out as expected. In vain, our fallen human nature tries to control the things that are not under human control. On the other hand, if we have the faith to trust in God and the courage to let Him take charge of our situation, we will find that we have greater peace of mind, and a ready acceptance of whatever outcome God allows. Thus, we glorify God by trusting in Him and putting our lives into His capable, loving hands. St Paul reminds us that God is able to accomplish much more than all we ask or imagine by the power of His grace working within us (cf. *Ephesians 3:20*).

The unhappy past can be surrendered to God. Many souls live trapped in the unhappy past. They have fallen into the devil's temptation which encourages unending regret about past sinful actions and blinds the soul to the power of God's mercy and forgiveness. Souls trapped in the past cannot fully utilize the graces that are available in the present moment. Once we repent sincerely of our sins, God's forgiveness is complete. *It is I, I, who wipe out, for My own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more (Isaiah 43:25).* After offering prayers and sacrifices in atonement for our repented sins, we should forget about our sinful past and live fully in the present moment. This is what God, our loving Father exhorts us to do. *Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the wilderness I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers (Isaiah 43:18-19).* With the power of God's grace, a fresh new start is always possible after we repent sincerely of our sins. There is no need to live in bondage to the past.

The future is in the loving hands of God. Like every loving parent, God has a good plan for every one of us. At the top of His holy desires, God wants every one of His children to attain the glorious, eternal inheritance He has planned for every one of His children. He has shown us clearly how much He desires this by sending His Son, Jesus to be the atoning Sacrifice for our sins so that heaven is open to everyone who accepts the love and mercy of God. The Lord says to each of us: *For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope (Jeremiah 29:11).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You said You come so that we may have life and have it abundantly. Free me from all sinful bondages that keep me bound to the earth and which deny me the true freedom to attain the full potential You have created in me. Give me the wisdom to seek first God's Kingdom so that when You are enthroned in my heart, no thing or person will have any hold over me. I consecrate to You through the Immaculate Heart of Mary every present moment of my life, my past, my future so that my whole life can become a hymn of praise to You. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.