

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jun 21st 2014

I'm going to be honest with you as I begin this reflection. I tend to be a worrier. If a recovery program for worriers existed, I would most likely be a member. The only problem would be I would worry about everyone in the group! The good news is, I've come a long way from my young adult years thanks to some wise and patient mentors--people who have helped me discover the wisdom which Jesus shares with us in today's Gospel.

My father was also a worrier. Once my mother delivered her eighth child (six of whom were female,) his parental anxiety escalated. His solution was to cover his bases and find a way to share his responsibilities. He very solemnly instructed me when I was growing up that my duty as the oldest child was to be responsible for my seven younger siblings. He often said: If anything ever happens to your mom and me, you will raise your sisters and brothers. We are Irish and that is what first born daughters do in Ireland. (I haven't researched this Irish family job-duty rule and I'm not sure where my father picked it up since he only traveled to Ireland once but I took his words very seriously and assumed the mantle of a third parent—especially to my younger siblings.) I worried about being responsible for them and was consistently concerned about their well-being. They were good sports through it all and adjusted to my parental ways. My parents lived a long and healthy life but I always kept my parental mindset.

I am convinced that Jesus preached the words in today's gospel for people like me and my dad. I have always felt a sense of solidarity with the disciples since they must have been worriers too. If not, why would Jesus say to them: Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life...Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin...Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will take care of itself.

Jesus goes straight to the heart of what happens to us when we are excessive worriers. We risk forgetting that God is with us through it all. We think everything depends on us. We may even lose our faith and trust in God. My favorite line in the gospel provides tremendous relief: Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?

One of my dearest mentors and friends was a kind and caring pastor in a parish where I worked. He used to tease me when I started to over-worry about something. His best advice which I have never forgotten was when he said: whenever you are facing something that you are anxious about simply ask yourself if you have consulted with God. Then reflect on whether you have done every reasonable thing you can do and then release the outcomes. Susan, think R.O./Release the Outcomes! He died a few years ago but I have kept his picture on my desk and to this day, I remember his kind words. I still whisper those two letters, R.O. and soon after I begin to experience the peace.

Jesus too mentored his disciples. Although his disciples likely had many things which caused them concern, Jesus lovingly reminded them about God's strength and great desire for their serenity. I trust that they received the same peace of mind from Jesus which I received from my friend.

Today, look inside your heart to reflect if there is something causing you sorrow, anxiety or pain. Consult with God, check in with yourself to see if there is anything you may wish to do about it. Once you are satisfied that you have done all you can reasonably do, gently hand it over to God. Release the outcome and let the peace of God enfold you.

Susan Naatz - Creighton University Ministry