

**SPIRITUALITY**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Heb 4:12

R<sup>7</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

The word of God is living and effective; discerning reflections and thoughts of the heart.

R<sup>7</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** Matt 6:24-34;

L82A

Jesus said to his disciples:

**“No one can serve two masters.**

**He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other.**

**You cannot serve God and mammon.**

**“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear.**

**Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?**

**Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?**

**Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow.**

**They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?**



**Reflecting on the Gospel**

This gospel is full of questions, just as our everyday living is. We struggle with providing for our needs, having enough for retirement, worrying about paying mounting bills. And so we often ask, how will we manage? Where will we be in ten years? How can we not worry? Amidst the myriad questions that fill this gospel and daily living, we must strike a balance between having an overly confident trust in ourselves and our own abilities, on the one hand, and not having too naive a dependence on God on the other hand.

Everyday living requires that we both engage with providing ourselves with what we need as well as turning ourselves to God who provides all. It's all about perspective and Jesus tells us what is a proper perspective: we are to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” In all we do, we must keep God and right relationship before us as our guiding perspective. The issue of the gospel is not our time and concerns; the issue is who or what master controls our decisions and their outcomes. Beginning with the conviction that God cares and provides for us, our only overriding worry ought to be how strong we seek God and divine righteousness.

It is natural to worry about immediate things that affect our daily living like food and shelter, job security and paying bills. We usually don't worry about ultimate things. Our own short-sightedness can leave us quite impoverished. Jesus challenges

us to a longer view: “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” With this perspective our wealth is assured, but it is not a wealth counted by met needs, worry-free security, or material possessions. The wealth God offers is the Life given those embraced by God's tender love—Life lived today, tomorrow, and for eternity.

Jesus tells us that we cannot serve “two masters.” Clearly, he is pitting exclusive concern (“worry”) with ourselves, our wants, our needs against single-mindedly seeking “the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” We are not to neglect our legitimate needs, but to keep them in proper perspective. We must “not worry” but look beyond today and even tomorrow. In everything we do, we must serve only one Master, the God who lavishly provides and cares for us—today, tomorrow, and even unto fullness of Life forever.

**Living the Paschal Mystery**

Our perspective on life, on what matters to us, on what drives our decisions is revealed to us in many ways. We need only to look at our possessions, preoccupations, what motivates us. When we become caught up in serving our social status or image, our acquisition of things, our professional success, even our own self-righteousness, we afflict ourselves with the anxieties such priorities always engender. When we choose to serve God—make God the Master-center of our lives—we enter a realm of internal freedom and wealth beyond calculation.

The gospel invites us to turn our attention to what truly matters—the Life only God can give. What is Jesus telling us must be our first concern in life? While being attentive to having the food and clothing, etc., that is normal and necessary, our priority must be what God offers and only God can give: eternal care, eternal Life.

*Continued in Appendix A, p. 267.*

**Focusing the Gospel**

**Key words and phrases:** two masters, do not worry, Father knows that you need, seek first, all . . . will be given you

**To the point:** In this gospel Jesus tells us that we cannot serve “two masters.” Clearly, he is pitting exclusive concern (“worry”) with ourselves, our wants, our needs against single-mindedly seeking “the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” We are not to neglect our legitimate needs, but to keep them in proper perspective. We must “not worry” but look beyond today and even tomorrow. In everything we do, we must serve only one Master, the God who lavishly provides and cares for us—today, tomorrow, and even unto fullness of Life forever.

**Connecting the Gospel**

**to the first reading:** With great tenderness God assures us that we will never be forsaken in what really matters—having an abiding, intimate relationship with God. Divine tenderness inspires us to serve God, the one Master, through everything and anything we do.

**to experience:** We tend to worry most when we are uncertain of an outcome or not in control of a situation, for example, whether we will have a job next week, whether we will be able to pay the month’s bills, whether our children will grow up with good values. While these cares and worries are always part of our everyday struggles, the gospel reminds us that we must keep God at the center of all we do and all our choices.

**Connecting the Responsorial Psalm**

**to the readings:** The first reading, psalm, and gospel present us with the same message: we are not to worry about our well-being, for God is the rock of our salvation (psalm), the mother who will never forget us (first reading), and the father who will provide for our every need (gospel). Knowing this, Jesus chides us to put our priorities in order and pursue God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness above all other goods.

But doing this is not easy! Placing pursuit of God’s kingdom above all other concerns requires immense trust in God. And this is precisely Jesus’ point. He is calling us to see more clearly how intimately God is involved in our lives, both in its daily unfolding and in its ultimate outcome. He is inviting us to choose as master One who is our father, mother, rock, and refuge, One who perceives our deepest needs and never fails to fill them. Yes, let us “Rest in God alone”; all else will be given to us.

**to psalmist preparation:** Your singing of this responsorial psalm needs to come from a heart and mind filled with confidence and trust in God. When are you most able to “rest in God”? What leads you to become restless and worried? What helps you in the midst of worry to refocus on God?

**ASSEMBLY & FAITH-SHARING GROUPS**

- I find myself worrying most when . . .  
What I worry most about is . . .
- My master is . . .
- I recognize that what I do today and even tomorrow goes beyond . . .

**PRESIDERS**

My preaching challenges the members of the assembly to reflect on their daily choices and which master they serve when I . . .

**DEACONS**

I assure those to whom I minister that God cares for ordinary human needs when . . .

**HOSPITALITY MINISTERS**

The manner of my greeting assures those gathering that God cares for them when I . . .

**MUSIC MINISTERS**

What helps me keep my music ministry focused on the right Master is . . .

**ALTAR MINISTERS**

My ministry goes beyond the tasks of serving to the Master I serve when I . . .

**LECTORS**

When I reflect on the tenderness God shows me, my proclamation sounds like . . .

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

My manner of distributing Holy Communion witnesses to God’s tender care for us when I . . .