

8th Sunday, Ord. Time (A)
St. Athanasius and St. Francis Parishes
February 25, 26, 2017

(song) “Don't worry; be happy” Bobby McFerrin
every life we have some trouble.... when you worry you make it double
No place to lay your head, somebody came took your bed
got no cash, got no style, got no girl to make you smile don't worry, be happy now.

A poster I often made to hang on my classroom wall when teaching read:
Now that this has happened, what are you, God, and I going to do about it?
And, a favorite haiku, Japanese poem, of mine says,
Now that my house burned down, I have a better view of the rising moon.

I thought these would be some ways to get into breaking open the Word of God for today. This, as you know, is our last weekend in Ordinary Time until we get through all the Lent, Easter and Pentecost Feasts sometime in the middle of June. In these past weeks we have heard some interesting things from the Sermon on the Mount:

- you are salt and you are light
- we are not to kill; in fact, we are not even to be angry
- we must not commit adultery; in fact again, we are not even to lust after another
- our righteousness must surpass that of the Scribes and the Pharisees
- actually, we are to be as holy as God; perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

And now today, we are not to worry about all of this. All this, as you well know, is much easier said than done.

To help us reflect on this we do, however, have wonderful words from the Prophet Isaias:

*Jerusalem says, “The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.”
And then God says, “Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even is she should forget, I will never forget you.”*

We are assured that God never forgets us; don't worry be happy! Yes, God never forgets us, but it is all too easy for us to forget God. God cares deeply for us, and this is what should ground and support our entire spiritual life? A good question may just be, “Do I have a spiritual life.” Of course each of us does, but are we aware of it. Maybe we treat our spiritual lives as we do the air we never think of it until we can't breathe. Or, like we treat a spouse, a parent, or a sibling never giving much thought to them until they aren't there.

There is a famous quote, most often attributed to C.S Lewis, (but that is suspect at this point in history). The quote, “You don't have a soul, you are a soul. Your soul has a

body, temporarily!” We give so much time and energy to our body what are we to eat, and what are we to wear ...? What kind of time, and what kind of energy, do we give to our soul? Lent is a great season to pay attention to our soul.

Immediately we think, I really don't have much time for that ... there are all these other things I need to be about ... work, family, food, clothes etc. So do we trust God enough to make time for the things of the soul

Friday night Mass and Stations of the Cross during Lent ...
organizing a faith sharing group, using the book Resisting Happiness
reading some Scripture and then taking 5-10 minutes to think about the
holy Word of God.

coming to Mass early on the weekend, or staying after Mass for a few minutes
just to have some one-on-one time with God.

Don't be afraid to adjust your schedule to make time for these kinds of spiritual practices.

Some other words of Scripture that we have heard these past weekends ought to rouse us to pay attention to our souls, our spiritual lives

“If you remove from your midst oppression ... bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted ... the gloom shall become for you like midday.”

“We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away.”

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

“Let those who are considered wise in this age become fools, so as to become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God.”

“No one can serve two masters .. You cannot serve God and mammon ... Learn from the way the wild flowers grow...”

We have many opportunities to excel spiritually, in often amazing ways ... but we either don't recognize them, or we are afraid of them. Don't worry be happy!

SJW: 50th annv. Gift to the community ... \$2500 I probably said something like “are you missing a zero at the end? The annual parish budget was usually 1.3 or 1.4 million. One man reminded us of how we got there. Don't worry ... The end result was \$90,000 and a house for Habitat. Do not let fear keep you from risking and doing the right and good thing. (St. A only: We have just received a very large gift of money here in the parish does anyone think that maybe some of it should just be given away?) Don't worry, be happy!

So, what are we to do? How do I get to a place where I am not worrying all the time? Decide on a plan to spend time with God each day. I used to ask Seniors in high school to give 10 minutes each day to be quiet with God. Some did. If we are quiet with God each day we will know his love, his care, and his commitment to us. God does not forget us God does not go back on his promises. Once I know this really know this I won't worry and just maybe I'll even be happy!