

8th Sunday of the Year A

*Do not worry about tomorrow:
tomorrow will take care of itself.
Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Mt 6:34)*



First Reading

Isaiah 49:14-15

Zion was saying, "The Lord has abandoned me, the Lord has forgotten me." Does a woman forget her baby at the breast, or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God. What is expected of stewards is that each one should be found worthy of his trust. Not that it makes the slightest difference to me whether you, or indeed any human tribunal, find me worthy or not. I will not even pass judgement on myself. True, my conscience does not reproach me at all, but that does not prove that I am acquitted: the Lord alone is my judge. There must be no passing of premature judgement. Leave that until the Lord comes: he will light up all that is hidden in the dark and reveal the secret intentions of men's hearts. Then will be the time for each one to have whatever praise he deserves, from God.

Gospel

Matthew 6:24-34

Jesus said to his disciples: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and money.

That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? So do not worry; do not say, 'What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?' It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Meditation

To understand today's gospel, we must remember the first beatitude, "How happy are the poor in spirit" (Mt 5:3). If the kingdom is near at hand, and already mysteriously present with Jesus, then it is of prime importance to opt for God without compromise, to serve him with a single heart, and to give ourselves to him with total confidence in his plan of salvation. No one can serve two masters. No one can serve both God and money! Any reality which exerts an insidious and brutal mastery over our lives is an idol. Money is often such an idol. Its domination threatens all people and things. The desire to possess it leads nations and families into conflict and into sacrificing the weak. Even those who give themselves wholeheartedly to the worship of a freeing God find themselves enmeshed in the demands of mammon.

Just as a woman caresses her child, God wraps us in gentle care. We are invited to submit all our anxieties to God's providence. Money is often the final barrier which hinders that trust. Yet it is still impossible to rid ourselves of money. The problem is how to use it without becoming its slave. Money is a tool with which we work to cooperate with God in completing creation. We are called to live with confidence at the edge of an insecure universe and exchange thousands of life's anxious cares for the central focus of working for the kingdom.