

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church  
Trinity XV  
September 17, 2023  
rmcneely+

Your Heavenly Father knows your needs.  
But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness  
And all these things will be added unto you.

Archbishop Provençe used to say  
that the Long Green of the Trinity Season  
was give us sign posts  
that guide our way along the Christian walk to God.  
We are now about 2/3rds down the green walk of Trinity  
And have this wonderful signpost today  
to keep us On the straight  
and narrow way of our life.

Today we conclude a three-week study  
of St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians  
and for the last time in the Trinity Season,  
we hear Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount.

You know, our Maker knows us so well.  
He speaks to His concern for our nature.  
We are so easily disquieted,  
distracted  
and develop distrustful cares about our lives  
that interrupt the life God intended for us.

It reminds me of a time when I was a boy and was downtown in  
Walnut Creek  
It was this time of year  
In the days when we actually still had walnut trees  
And we actually celebrated their harvest  
With a Walnut Festival.

I was watching the Walnut Festival Parade down Main Street  
And had arranged that my Mother would pick me up  
after the parade at a designated time and place.

My Mother was late and  
I waited there beyond the time that a boy will wait  
And gave up and walked home,  
which was not too far away.

In the meanwhile, Mom was frantically looking for me  
And when we both arrived home  
Among the comments  
Which were rich,  
but not entirely appropriate for this discussion,  
there was the clear message that she was so terribly hurt  
that I could think she would not come for me, ever.

Knowing how much she loved me,  
How could I believe that she could not come for me as she  
said she would?

In a way, that's what Jesus is concerned about in today's lesson.

The Sermon on the Mount was revolutionary.  
With it, Jesus introduced radical doctrine  
That was off putting for many  
who gathered to hear it.

It outlined a new life  
A new pathway to God.  
That is why we go to it time and again during the Trinity  
Season Survey of Essential Christian Doctrine

The Sermon contradicted some ancient religious thinking of the  
Jews

And advanced ancient Jewish Law  
Without contradicting it, He brought it forward.

The people who heard it must have been awestruck.  
Matthew devotes three full chapters of his book to the Sermon.  
It is wide ranging, discussing a myriad of topics.

Some abandoned Jesus after they heard his Sermon on the Mount.  
Some gathered to hear more.

We do not have absolute certainty as to when Jesus gave the Sermon.

It followed His baptism by John, the Baptist  
His 40 day temptation in the desert,  
And healings in Galilee.  
So it was early in His earthly ministry.  
A time when His reputation was growing.  
And it defined the thinking  
That would later be known as “Christianity”.

We do not know the precise location where Jesus gave the Sermon.  
The “mount” must have been near Capernaum  
According to the context of Matthew’s writing.

However, whenever it occurred and wherever it occurred  
It is a marvel that we have it  
Preserved in the Gospel of St Matthew.

In the portion of the Sermon that is the Gospel for today,  
Jesus offers His advice,  
His consolation  
For those times in our lives when we become  
Disquieted,  
Distracted,  
And Distrustful  
Of God’s loving Hand in our lives.

Sometimes we do it to ourselves  
And sometimes it seems that satan himself  
Gets us off the page.

Our minds become clouded and overcome.  
We blot out the joy that we have in God  
And become hurried and worried.  
Anxious.

We loose sleep and dampen the joy that God intends us to feel  
As we focus ourselves on the mundane  
And material aspects of our lives.

It is not that such things as hunger, shelter and nakedness  
Are not important.  
Or should be irrationally or blissfully ignored.

The part of our nature to which Jesus points us  
Is the obsession with those things,  
To the exclusion of any consideration of how God  
Has already prepared us for those times.  
How He will restore us and guide us through them.

Jesus tells us four times in this short snippet from the Sermon on the Mount

“Be not anxious for your life”.  
He offers an analogy to the birds of the air,  
To the lilies of the field  
And to the grass of the field.

He scolds us  
“O ye of little faith”.

If God cares for them,  
How could he not care for you?  
How could I think my Mother would not care for me  
As I waited for her on the Street of Walnut Creek?

As my Mother almost tearfully explained to me after the Parade,  
 How could we ever think that God's love  
 Would ever be insufficient for us?

But isn't that just what we do sometimes?  
 Sometimes over insignificant things but sometimes over things of  
 greater significance.

In today's Epistle St Paul speaks of the distraction  
 That had the Galatians off the page.

Jesus knows us well  
 And the way we become anxious,  
 turn away from our faith,  
 turn away from God  
 and worry about secular things to His exclusion in our lives.

But God does not treat us the way He does the birds and the  
 flowers.

He provides for us in a more permanent and fundamental way.  
 Instead of feeding us, and sheltering us directly,  
 God provides us with our opportunity to labor  
 Which He has made our duty  
 And then blesses that labor for the means of our lives.  
 Some say we got work, not worms.

So it is our God Given talents,  
 intellect,  
 conscience  
 and liberties,  
 That sustain us.

Unlike the lower animals of God's creation  
 We are self-reliant.  
 creations of God  
 that still rely on His Grace and His Love.

So do not expect God to send Door Dash with your next meal  
From Narsai David,

And do not expect that Wilks-Bashford or Saks  
Will be delivering your Fall Wardrobe any time soon.

But do expect this:

As Jesus said in the Sermon:

“...your Heavenly Father knoweth  
that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first, His Kingdom

And His righteousness

And all these things shall be added unto you”.

In those moments when all seems lost

And you can not take the next step

Seek His Kingdom

And His Righteousness.

Turn to God

In prayer

In the sacraments

And here is some 2000 year old advice:

“And which of you by being anxious  
can add one cubit  
unto the measure of you life”.

In these times when our lives are pressured

And we seem almost infected with the “stress”

Of our lives,

Here is the Son of God

With advice:

Our lives, by any measure:  
    Its length  
    Breadth  
    Substance  
    Or quality  
    Cannot be increased one cubit  
        One day  
        One dollar  
        Or one smile  
    By worrying for being anxious.

So enjoy the Parade  
And know that if you can keep your heart and mind  
    In knowledge and love of God  
When it's over  
He'll be there to pick you up  
And take you home.

