

What, me worry?

For those of us who can remember the heyday of *Mad* magazine and its hero Alfred E. Neuman, you know that, “What, me worry?” was his response to just about any situation. I am reminded of that mindset when I hear one of my favorite biblical parables: The birds in the sky and the flowers in the field (Matthew 6:25-34). Jesus tells us not to worry about our lives. Do you see the birds of the air hard at work stockpiling food or building elaborate nests? Do the wildflowers compete to look finer than the neighboring plants. No, but if God provides for these lesser creations of nature, just think how much more important our welfare is to Him.

Does that mean we can settle back and just go with the flow? Not really, although Divine Providence (loosely translated: Whatever will be, will be.) is an ongoing intervention in our world and it seems to be the ready response when an explanation of loss doesn’t make sense to us. We hear comments such as, “It just wasn’t meant to be.” Maybe, maybe not. Jesus tells us worrying about the fortunes of life is unproductive for none of us knows when our lives will end. He tells us to stop worrying about our destiny and live our lives to the fullest. When education is available, we are obligated to study and learn. When we find a job, we should do our best, no matter how menial the task, for work builds dignity. However, God is not going to hand us the wherewithal to live without some effort on our part. And that means we will earn money. How much money do we need? Jesus doesn’t say; He only warns us about being obsessed with money, especially when it becomes our master.

Money in itself is not evil, but it becomes a problem when it controls our lives. We have all been taught that money does

not buy happiness. However, it buys things which we frequently mistake for happiness. Will a bigger house be fulfilling or is it just another worry to add to our financial woes? How about the latest fashions? No one wants to be out of style, but do we know when we have enough in our closet? Or do we insist on a bigger closet? Jesus tries to divert us from the trivial things that we get hung up on.

Our goal in this life is righteousness, doing what is right. In his sermon on the mount Jesus said, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10). Throughout the Bible we are encouraged to practice righteousness, but it is never fully defined. However, Jesus gave us a conscience and a pathway to knowledge. We are equipped to know what is wrong and we need to set it right.

We do this individually and collectively. We know in our personal relationships what behavior and empathy are essential. Likewise, we also realize that, as a member of society, we must treat everyone with the dignity and compassion that would meet Jesus’ standards. We can never be satisfied with the attitude that our efforts are good enough. If we see that any of our institutions can be made better, it is our duty to work together to effect those changes. Jesus didn’t say it but birds of a feather do flock together and if there is one sunflower in a field, there will be dozens more. Take that observation to heart and work together. Back in the day Alfred E. Neuman was the satire that helped us see our folly. How refreshing it would be today if we could correct and laugh at our mistakes instead of screaming ugly names at one another.

Written by Ray Huss, a member of our Stewardship Committee

Everyday Stewardship

I love watching replays of great sports highlights. Sometimes you see something so extraordinary that you tell others they have to see it to believe it. The one-handed catch, the in-the-park home run, and the photo finish are all examples of these types of moments. They are amazing feats that boggle the mind.

I wonder how many people in biblical times saw Jesus perform miracles and told others they wouldn’t have believed it unless they saw it with their own eyes. Of course, we believe the stories of his miracles, and we didn’t see them in person. We do believe them, don’t we?

There is no television program that features replays of the actual miracles Jesus performed 2,000 years ago. However, there are miracles every day for the world to see. Many of those come about by allowing God to work through us. People are waiting to be healed and fed, and mountains are waiting to be moved. There might not be a replay for these miracles either. However, people will be amazed by the power of God. Jesus said we could do these things if we had faith. Blessed are those who believe but who have not seen. Furthermore, blessed are those who perform great works with God so that others may see.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS Liturgical Publications

