

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(Matthew 6: 24-33)

(*Poem* Vol. 2, pp. 170, 161-3, Vol. 1, pp. 710-1;
Gospel Vol. 3, pp. 129, 119-21, Vol. 2, pp. 364-5)

(During His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urges the many people present, including some poor people, to resist the allurements of senses, of the world, and of the demon. He says:)

'If your actions are a mixture of good and evil, they are of no value whatsoever. The entirely good ones would be cancelled by the bad ones. The evil ones would lead you straight into the Enemy's arms. Therefore do not indulge in them. Be loyal in your service.

No one can serve two masters with two different minds. He will either love one and hate the other, or vice-versa. You cannot be both of God, and of Mammon. The spirit of God cannot be reconciled with the spirit of the world. The former ascends, the latter descends. The former sanctifies, the latter corrupts. And if you are corrupt, how can you act with purity? Senses light up in corrupt people, and other lusts follow senses...'

'...Yesterday I received, from one who has nothing, more than all those who are rich, have given Me. He is a friend, and as poor as I am. But he gave Me something which no money can buy, and which made Me happy. It brought back to Me so many serene hours of My childhood and youth, when every evening the hands of a Just One were laid on My head, and I went to rest with his blessing as the guardian of My sleep. Yesterday this poor friend of Mine made Me king with his blessing... None of My rich friends has given Me what he gave Me. Therefore, be not afraid. Even if you no longer have the power of money, providing you have love and holiness, you can still assist whoever is poor, tired and distressed.

I therefore say to you: do not worry too much because you are afraid of having too little. You will always have what is necessary. Do not worry too much about your future. Nobody knows how much future there is ahead of him. Do not worry about what you will eat to support yourselves in life, or what clothes you will put on to keep your bodies warm. The life of your souls is by far more precious than your stomachs and your limbs, and it is much more valuable than your food and your clothes...

Your Father knows. You ought to know, too. Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns, and yet they do not starve to death, because the heavenly Father feeds them. And you men, the favourite creatures of the Father, are worth much more than they are.

Which of you, with all his talent, can add one single cubit to his height? If you cannot raise your height even by a span, how can you possibly change your future conditions, increasing your wealth, to ensure that you will live to a long and happy old age? Can you speak to death, saying: "You shall come for me when I want"? You cannot. Why, then, worry about your future? And why go to so much trouble lest you should be left without clothes? Think of the lilies growing in the fields: they do not work or spin, they do not buy any cloth from vendors, yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of them. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field - which is there today and will be thrown into the furnace tomorrow, or which will be used to feed the cattle and will thus end up in ash or dung - how much more He will see to you, His children?

Do not be of little faith. Do not worry about an uncertain future, saying: "What shall I eat when I am old? What shall I drink? How will I clothe myself?". Leave such worries to the Gentiles, who do not have the lofty certainty of the divine paternity. You have it, and you know that the Father is aware of your needs, and He loves you. Therefore trust Him.

Seek first what is really necessary: faith, goodness, charity, humility, mercy, purity, justice, meekness, the three and four main virtues, and all the others as well - in order to be the friends

of God, and to have a right to His Kingdom. And I can assure you that all the rest will be given to you as well, without you having to ask for it.

There is no rich man richer than a saint, nor is there any man safer than he is. God is with the saint, and the saint is with God. He does not ask anything for his body, and God supplies what is necessary. But he works for his soul, and God gives Himself to him in this world, and Paradise in the next one.

So do not go to any trouble for what is not worth your trouble. Let your imperfections grieve you, not your scanty earthly means. Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself, and you will take care of it when you live it. Why worry today? Is life not already quite full of yesterday's sad memories and of today's troubles, that we should feel the need to add the nightmares of tomorrow's uncertainties? Leave to each day its own trouble! In life there will always be more pains than we would wish, without adding the present pains to future ones! Always say the great word of God: "Today". You are His children, created to His likeness. So say with Him: "Today".

And today I give you My blessing. May it accompany you until the beginning of a new today: of tomorrow, that is when I will give you once again My peace in the name of God.'

(At another time, Jesus speaks about the Tenth Commandment: "Thou shalt not covet what belongs to your neighbour:)

'...I have often used little children as an example, because they are simple and trustful. Today I say to you: imitate birds in their freedom from desires. Look. It is now winter. There is little food in the orchards. Do they worry about hoarding it in summer? No, they do not. They trust in the Lord. They know that they will always be able to catch for their little crops: a small worm, a little grain, a crumb, a small spider, a little fly floating on water. They know that there will always be a warm chimney-top or a flock of wool to shelter them in winter. And they know also that when the time comes when they will need hay for their nests and more food for their little ones, there will be sweet-smelling hay in the fields and juicy food in the orchards and in the furrows, and the air and the soil will be rich in insects. And they sing: "Thank You, Creator, for what You give us and will give us", and they are ready to sing hosannas at the top of their voices: when they will enjoy the company of their mates during the mating season, and when they see their offspring multiply.

Is there a happier creature than a bird? And what is its intelligence as compared to the intelligence of man? A chip of silica compared with a mountain. But it teaches you a lesson. I solemnly tell you that whoever lives without any impure desires possesses the joy of a bird. He trusts in God, and feels that God is his Father. He smiles at the rising day and at the falling night, because he knows that the sun is his friend, and night is his nourishment. He looks at men without malice, and is not afraid of their vengeance, because he does not harm them in any way. He is not afraid for his health or his sleep, because he knows that an honest life prevents diseases and grants a peaceful rest. And finally, he is not afraid of death, because he knows that, since he has always acted well, God can but smile at him...'