

8th Sunday of the Year A February 27, 2011 – Fr. Gerald Haemmerle

When we read the morning paper, when we watch the news on T.V. we cannot help but be concerned, to be worried. So much of the news is bad news. It seems that all of north Africa is in chaos. Egypt, Tunisia, and now Libya are all in an uproar. Optimistically we hope for the emergence of some democracies in that area, but we also fear unrest and maybe even anarchy. In our own country things are hardly peaceful. It seems that every state capitol is filled with protesters, and battle lines keep being drawn. Will things ever return to the way they used to be? And were things really as good as we like to think they once were? And in the present, in all of history, where is God?

Are the scriptures relevant at all today? I believe they are, just as I believe they always have been. They tell us how God acted at the time the scriptures were written, and in turn how he acts in our world today.

Isaiah in our first reading was writing for a dejected people. They had been defeated by the Babylonians, and taken into exile. They felt that God had abandoned them. Isaiah said "Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you." There is no greater affirmation of God's love for us in all of scripture than this short statement.

Our gospel today is most beautiful, and perhaps should be read every day. "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink or wear. Look at the birds in the sky, they do not sow or reap, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Look at the lilies of the field. They do not work or spin. But not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. So do not worry.

We are for the most part blessed that we don't have to worry about having food, we might worry about rather our clothes are fashionable, but don't have to worry about being clothed. But we do worry, and often we do not trust enough in God. I want to share an example of trust.

Many of you have met my mother, some have gotten to know her. She will be 96 this summer. She is always fashionably dressed and with it. She is the greatest worrier on this earth. She had three children, has 8 grandchildren and 29 great grandchildren, plenty of material for worry. And she worries about each one of us and others. Every Sunday afternoon I learn about which ones she is now most worried about. Will Tim find a job, will Maggie get accepted in the college she hopes to get in, and on and on? How has she survived 95 years of worry without being eaten up by an ulcer? A simple reason. She has a deep faith, and absolute trust in God. She prays far more than me or anyone in the family. She has gone to morning mass every single day for the past 60 years. Always at least a rosary a day, and several hours before the blessed sacrament every First Friday. And her special devotions. She absolutely believes that God hears her prayers and in His own way responds to them. She absolutely believes that God loves all of His children, more than a mother loves her child. Because of that faith she has survived all these years, despite the worries.

Lent is just a week and a half away. I have already suggested that we return to the sacrament of reconciliation during that season. Now I am suggesting that we turn to prayer in a special way during that season. It is a great cure for the worries of life.