

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – A

Being a bit of a worrier, I feel like I'm not in a very good position to preach on this Sunday's readings.

There are so many things that seem like they could go wrong if I adopted Jesus' approach, and so I worry about that.

I friend of mine from college lost his job at age 55, with three kids still at home and two in college. I felt his plight deeply, and considered, if that were me, I would truly be at my wit's end.

And yet, I know how pernicious worry can be; how it can rob us of even the most obvious blessings in the here and now.

Jesus mentions the glorious beauty of lilies in bloom. Worry can blind us from seeing the beauty in a flower, or the blessedness in the laughter of a child.

I suppose that I'll be worrying until the day I die, but what I'm working on is to hold the worry at bay with the practice of being present to what's happening right now.

Worry is a form of living in the future, a future of our own making, though, complete with all your preconceptions of what makes for a happy life.

Such an approach is basically built on a form of denial. We deny the fact that the future is not ours to control. It lies

in the hand of God.

There are any number of stories of people who worked hard all their lives to save up for their retirement, only to discover that, within a year of retiring they had cancer, or died of a heart attack. And all the worry they had poured into their living in the future went for naught.

Worry overcompensates. If we let it lead us, we will invariably put too much effort into trying to secure things that can't provide security.

The better approach that Jesus is promoting is to recognize that God cares for us. The image in the first reading is so incontestable—a mother caring for her child. And that's the one God wants us to focus on.

That caring is not in the sense of "You don't have to do anything, because I've got this." I'm not inviting anyone to quit their job.

But it's caring in the sense of helping us maintain perspective and providing us with the inspiration to live fruitful and happy lives that are not built on stuff;

lives that are free enough to receive the gifts God gives today, even as we move into the future with a sense of purpose.

My friend from college seems to be doing that. His life and that of his

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family is not what he imagined. It's much more oriented to God than it was before because he knows it has to be.

I've taken note. It's been a forceful reminder to me to be careful, to live from the grace and blessing God gives me today, prudently managing my affairs but leaving the future in the hands of God.