

05/25/08
St. John's Roanoke
Matthew 6:25-34
The Rt. Rev. A. Heath Light

I. "Assist us O Christ

To trust the past to the mercy of God;
To trust the present to the love of God; and
To trust the future to the providence of God."

Amen

II. There are anxiety-producing times

1. Earthquakes, cyclones, and tsunamis kill thousands and displace millions.
2. Darfur continues as a tragedy of major preparations where untold numbers continue to face starvation.
3. We are anxious about politics, about the state of the economy, about the price of food and gasoline. We are all anxious about health insurance and Social Security.

III. My perception is that anxiety is built into the human psyche.

We learn early to be anxious:

1. As children we are warned to "*be careful.*"
2. As young adults we face the anxieties of tests, exams, social acceptance and various forms of so-called "*success.*"
3. As adults many of us nearly forget to "*set aside something for a rainy day.*"

In reality we humans are alone as creators who are consciously aware that one day we will die. The awareness of death is fundamental/ontological reality that is the ultimate anxiety in life.

IV. (Read the text: Matthew 6:25,34a)

6:25 "Do not be anxious about your life."

6:34a "Do not be anxious about tomorrow for tomorrow will be anxious for itself" The fundamental issue is trust.

V. My opening prayer invoked that:

We trust the past to the mercy of God;
We trust the present to the love of God; and
We trust the future to the providence of God.

Anxiety is a great thief, robbing us of life. Anxieties about yesterday and about tomorrow rob us of today. Consider the lilies of the field. I don't believe that God and/or scripture are asking us to be less than human (i.e.) not to know human frailty (i.e.) to sublimate human reality.

The most persuading advice cannot relieve us of human anxiety!

Jesus became human that we may perceive God's presence in the midst of life, and in receiving that revelation we are redeemed from a fatal and futile falling into despair about human life and human reality.

VI. The call to us is a call to *trust*. In my mind the act of trust is synonymous with the act of faith! "Consider the lilies of the field" the contrast is the contrast between something strived and something effortless. So many of us stoke our lives on what we can accomplish, what we can achieve- activities of our own making.

The kind of trust/faith being described is comparable to the growth of a flower. "Consider the lilies of the field." (ex) Sarah Ann and her daily trips to enjoy her garden. Yes, there is some work involved, but at the bare it is sheer gift.

VII. There is all the difference in the world between:

- grasping and letting
- strain and spontaneity
- between self-enslavement and freedom;
- between our way of “working” and God’s way of “working in us.”

The invitation of the gospel is “to consider the lilies” and “be not anxious” It is the invitation to “trust”

Trust the past to the mercy of God.
Trust the present to the love of God.
Trust the future to the providence of God.