

## Pastor Writes

Greetings to you all.

The theme for our mornings' meditation is that 'the world is full of signs which point to the goodness and providence of God.' In the gospel readings for today from St. Mathew, we see Jesus teaching his disciples that they were not to worry about their lives, about what they will eat or drink; or about their body, what they will wear. Why does Jesus tell us to stop worrying? We are worried because we are anxious about the future and we think that we should make arrangements for the future so that we may remain secure. The worry is primarily because of materialism. This is clear from the context because we see Jesus saying in verse 24, 'we cannot serve both God and money.' Jesus concludes this by talking about seeking God and his kingdom first. What are the reasons that Jesus gives for our worries?

Jesus tells us that life is more than what we eat or wear or drink. Life is much more important than all these material things. So often our worries are relatively unimportant, or trivial matters, such as food, drink, clothing, houses and cars. If we look at any of our typical magazines we will find it is preoccupied with the things that Jesus told us not to worry about. Most of the advertisements will focus on the body; how to shape it, how to take four and half kilos off without moving an inch; with how to make it more attractive; how to look younger; about the things that we should be eating; about the kind of cars we should be driving or about the houses we should be living in. Jesus is reminding us that if we seek fulfillment in material things alone we miss the point of life.

Jesus then gives them a lesson from nature. He says, 'Look at the birds in the air, they do not reap or store in barns; and yet the heavenly father feeds them, are you not much more valuable than they?' Jesus teaches that when we worry we are casting aspersions on God's character. We are in fact saying that God is more concerned about the birds of the air and not us who have been made in the image and likeness of God.

Jesus goes on to say that we cannot add a single hour to our life by worrying. No matter how much we are anxious about the future, we will never be able to lengthen our life but instead worry can only shorten it. When we look at the lilies of the field, they do not labor or spin, yet even Solomon in all his splendor was not dressed like one of these. If that is how God close the grass of the field, then how much more will He provide for us. Faith and worry are incompatible; they are like water and fire. Jesus says that only the unbelievers run after material things and our heavenly Father knows that we need them. So we see here that worry actually does not make sense; worry cannot give us life; it cannot satisfy our hunger or our thirst; It cannot lengthen our life; it is illogical and incompatible with faith.

Jesus therefore says, 'seek first the kingdom of God and all his righteousness then all these things will be given to you.' When we seek God's kingdom it means we are seeking God's rule and reign in our life, our marriages, in our homes in our family, in our lifestyle. We also seek God's reign in the lives of others, our friends, our neighbors, our colleagues, our community and our nation. How do we seek God's reign in all that we do?

Jesus gives us the answer by saying that we are to seek God's righteousness in our lives. This would mean a right relationship with God and with our neighbors as revealed through his Son Jesus. We are to bring in God's standard and norms within our society and our nation. In our own country there are many.

*Shalom*

*Paul Swarup*