

**SUNDAY GOSPEL***Trust in God**Matthew 6:24-34*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'No one can be the slave to two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn.

You cannot be the slave both of God and of money. 'That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all his worrying, add one single cubit to his span of life? And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they

never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? So do not worry, do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow, will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.' ■

**GOSPEL REFLECTION***Fr. Michael J. Dyer*

We are witnessing an unprecedented number of the world's political leaders confronted by the issue of whether to focus totally their time, energy and talent on leading their countries or whether to juggle their core duty with managing vast personal business empires and wealth. Increasingly public watchdogs, the media and certain bold bishops are demanding that one cannot serve both as their country's leader and as the CEO of major corporations; "for no one can be the slave of two masters; he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn". In other words, wherever a conflict of interest exists there is potential for injustice. Nevertheless, let's avoid pointing our finger too quickly at others. Rather, let's first examine our own conscience and address any conflict of interest in our personal and professional lives, for we must live ethically. Moreover, let us ensure that our love and practical devotion for God and our neighbour is never compromised which is possible for example if we become overly anxious about the future. Today's Gospel exhorts us to resist this temptation; or as one church billboard impishly proposes: "Why pray if we can worry"? ■

## A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS



At the centre of this Sunday's Liturgy we find one of the most reassuring truths: Divine Providence.

How beautiful is this! God does not forget us, not one of us! Everyone by name and surname. He loves us and doesn't forget. What a beautiful thought... This invitation to trust in God finds a home in Matthew's Gospel: "Look at the birds of the air", Jesus says, "they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.... Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Mt 6:26, 28-29).

However, thinking of the many people who live in precarious conditions, or even in a poverty

offensive to their dignity, these words of Jesus could seem abstract, if not illusory. But actually they are relevant, now more than ever! They remind us that you cannot serve two masters: God and wealth. We must take heed of this! As long as everyone seeks to accumulate for themselves, there will be no justice. Instead, by entrusting ourselves to God's providence, and seeking his Kingdom together, no one will lack the necessary means to live with dignity.

A heart troubled by the desire for possessions is a heart full of desire for possessions, but empty of God. That is why Jesus frequently warned the rich, because they greatly risk placing their security in the goods of this world, and security, the final security, is in God. In a heart possessed by wealth, there isn't much room for faith: everything is involved with wealth, there is no room for faith. If, however, one

gives God his rightful place, that is first place, then his love leads one to share even one's wealth, to set it at the service of projects of solidarity and development, as so many examples demonstrate, even recent ones, in the history of the Church. And like this God's Providence comes through our service to others, our sharing with others. If each of us accumulates not for ourselves alone but for the service of others, in this case, in this act of solidarity, the Providence of God is made visible. If, however, one accumulates only for oneself, what will happen when one is called by God? No one can take his riches with him, because — as you know — the shroud has no pockets! It is better to share, for we can take with us to Heaven only what we have shared with others. ■

### TALKING POINTS

1. All of us have somewhat divided loyalties – work & family; faith values & society values; sport (hobbies) & family life. Which are the 'masters' you serve? In this light what does Jesus mean by saying 'you cannot serve two masters'?
2. Pope Francis invites us to place our possessions and acquisition of possessions at the service of others, at the service of God. How do you react to this challenge?
3. Today's readings call us to 'not worry' and trust in God's Providence and the security God provides. What are some of your worries and fears that you would like to hand over to God?

### PRAYER POINTS

**Pray for each other:** Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

**Reflect:** Spend some time with Jesus asking him to fill your heart with secure faith relieving you of one of your worries this week.

**Response:** *Lord Jesus, we trust in your powerful love.*

**Closing Prayer:** Heavenly Father, you love us more than we can ever know or understand. Open our minds and hearts to your grace that allows us to let go of our worries and fears, placing them in your hands with trust and love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

