

Ordinary 27 A 2014

Have No Anxiety

Did you listen carefully? Did you hear the first words of today's second reading? Imprisoned and facing the prospect of his own death, St. Paul writes, "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving make your requests known to God." But how could Paul write these words? How could he say, have no anxiety at all?

If these words seem strange to us, perhaps it is because we live in an age of anxiety. We worry about family and friends. We worry about ourselves and our future. Most of the time, however, we worry about things over which we have no control. And even though we know it does no good, we worry. Even though we know worrying will not makes things better, we are anxious and concerned.

At a certain point in his life, however, St. Paul seems to have learned how foolish it is to worry and be filled with anxiety. At a certain point in his life, his faith and trust in Christ filled him with confidence. And so he could say to himself and to others, "have no anxiety, for the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ."

The peace of God will guard our hearts and minds. How we long for that peace, how we need that peace! The peace of God is God's gift of

confidence and assurance that all will be well, not because of what we do but because of what God has done for us. The peace of God does away with all anxiety because it assures us that God watches over and cares for us, just as he watched over and cared for his own Son.

When we live by faith and hope, we begin to experience the peace of God. When we trust and care in the providence of God, we begin to experience the peace of God. But when we fail to believe and trust in the goodness of God, we are filled with that anxiety that disturbs our life. It is then that we worry about things we cannot change; it is then that we are concerned about things that have not yet occurred.

In few moments we will recite the Lord's Prayer. After we recite that prayer, I will add this prayer,

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

After this prayer I say yet another prayer asking for God's peace

Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will.

This prayer, which we hear every week, perfectly expresses what Paul means when he encourages us not to be anxious. For when we entrust our future to the care of God, then God's peace fills our hearts and minds.