

3rd Sunday After Pentecost

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

When the people once asked the Savior when the Kingdom of God would come, He said, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:21). The kingdom of God is where Jesus is, where His love and truth reign among men. There is no love without truth. "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven for a Christian begins here on earth, with good relations with others, filled with the spirit of truth and love.

Teaching people about the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ said, "Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matt. 6: 31-33).

Once, a rich man pondered for a long time how to take what he had gained to the next world. Eventually, he asked his wife to collect all his wealth in a bag and hang it in the attic directly above the bed. "When my soul ascends to Paradise, I will take the bag with me," he explained. When her husband died, his wife ran to the attic to check on the bag. It was still hanging in place. "I knew it!" cried the loving wife, "We should have hung it in the basement!"

Another time, a peasant's cow gave birth to two calves, one red and one white. He was so grateful to the Almighty that he promised his wife that he would dedicate one calf to God. "When the time comes to sell the calves, I will give the proceeds for one to the church," said the peasant. "Which of the two do you want to dedicate to God?" The wife asked. "We will take care of them in the same way, and when the time comes, we will decide," the man replied. A few months later, the peasant came home upset: "I have bad news. The Lord's calf has died." "But you never decided which one belonged to God," the woman said. "Of course God himself decided," the peasant objected, "God owned the white one. It died." For some reason, it seems to always turn out that the calf belonging to God was the weakling. And in difficult times, the Lord's calf always seems to die first. When a person chooses between his own pleasure and the fulfillment of a promise to God, the Lord's calf always dies.

A Gallup poll illustrates the impact of money on family life: 64% of families quarrel over money. And 54% of divorces occur due to financial difficulties, which makes money the most common cause of divorce.

Excavations of the ancient city of Pompeii, which perished in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, have provided much useful information on life in the ancient world. Volcanic ash covered people almost instantly, keeping buildings and household items intact.

One of the women tried to escape, but did not have time. A handful of jewels was held in her hand. Even two millennia later, the remains of her body were weighed down by jewelry. The jewelry was preserved, but the woman died. The jewels were probably the most valuable thing she had and she tried to keep them for herself. But death always takes from man all that he has been able to gain during his earthly life.

It is easy to say: "Do not be anxious, and do not say 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" but not so easy to do it. We should try to get rid of earthly worries. Stress management experts say that only two percent of worries bring a positive result. The other 98% of the time spent worrying is distributed as follows:

40% of the time people worry about something that will never happen;

35% about things that cannot be changed;

15% about things that end better than expected;

And 8% are unfounded petty worries.

Thus, 98% of our worries do not give any positive results, but people continue to worry.

Finances, children, parents, health, money, property, work, the future, and much more give endless reasons to worry.

Many years ago, a priest explained how to get rid of worries. He took an empty glass and asked, "How can I keep air out of the glass?" He turned the glass upside down, put it aside, but the air remained. Eventually, he filled the glass with water, and the liquid displaced the air. Like air, earthly worries can be supplanted from human thoughts only by replacing them with something else, such as love, peace, and mercy. Dear Believers! If a person chooses a false path to happiness, he deceives himself, and it is no surprise that he cannot find happiness in life, which only God can give. The psalmist declares, "Only in God is the peace of my soul, and from him is my salvation" (Ps. 61: 2). "Only in God is peace, my soul, only in him is my hope" (Ps. 61: 6).