

Homily for the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Every week, in the intercessions, we pray
for generosity in the hearts of us who have more than we need...

So many of us have so much more than we need,
which we so easily take for granted
and, so often, jealous of others, even with more than we need,
we want for more than we already have.

In the gospel here,
Jesus tells us not to worry about what we have or don't have:
not to worry about food or drink or clothing
but rather to seek God first in our lives
- and not to worry about tomorrow.

Is it God we seek first in our lives?

In the midst of all we have and all we want,
are we "seeking first the kingdom of God"?

Perhaps the best way for each of us to get at that question
is to ask,

What do I seek in my life?

What do I seek in the work I do?

What do I seek in my family life? in my retired life?

Who and what

- *consume my time and effort?*

- *command my fullest attention?*

- *receive my quickest response?*

- *get priority on my calendar and schedule?*

And in all of this,

Whom and what do I worry about the most?

Of what in my neighbors' lives am I jealous?

Whom and what do I long for? wait for?

work for? hope for? dream of?

If we take an honest self-inventory guided by those questions,
how then will we respond then to Jesus' words,
Seek first the kingdom of God...?

Most of us do a fairly accurate job of looking at others
and assessing what they seek first in their lives.

Can we, with the same 20-20 vision view ourselves and ask,
"What do I seek first in my life?"

“What do others see me seeking?”

This is not, of course, a case of “either / or.”
Often, the way I seek the kingdom of God is in and through
the many other good things I seek in my life.

But the fine point on the question is this:
when push comes to shove, when the rubber hits the road,
when I have to discern the good things from the bad,
when I have to make difficult choices among many good things,
are my decisions and choices shaped by my desire to seek God first
in and above all other things in my life?

Have I the courage to ask that question?
Or better: can I afford not to ask it? to avoid it?

These are tough questions.
This is a hard saying -- a great challenge -- that Jesus puts to us here.

Certainly, this would be good food for thought and prayer in Lent
which is just around the corner.

We ponder these words in the shadow of the Cross,
our reminder that Jesus himself sought the kingdom of his Father
before anything else - before life itself.

And at the table of his sacrament here
he nourishes us with the life that is his to share
because of the sacrifice he offered for us.

May we find in the Eucharist the wisdom, the grace and the courage
to seek in our lives, above and beyond all else,
to seek, first, the kingdom of God.