

in the life of those who have faith in Jesus and those who do not have faith in Jesus. Those who have faith in Jesus share with him the experience of the gratuity of God the Father, Abba. This experience of paternity should revolutionize the life together. It should generate a community life in which is fraternal, and the seed of a new society.

In Matthew 6: 33-34, Jesus says, *Set your hearts on the Kingdom first*. Two criteria's are indicated by Jesus: "To seek first the Kingdom of God and not to worry about tomorrow." To seek first the Kingdom and its justice is a means to seek to do God's Will and allow God to reign in our life. The search for God is concretely expressed in the search of a fraternal and just life together. From this concern for the kingdom springs a community life in which all live as brothers and sisters and nobody is lacking anything. Here there will be no worry of tomorrow, that is, there will be no worry to store up things.

The kingdom of God should be the center of all our concerns. The Kingdom demands a life together, where there is no storing up of things, but sharing in such a way that all have what is necessary to live. The Kingdom is the new fraternal life together, in which each person feels responsible for others. This way of seeing the Kingdom helps to understand better the parables of the birds and of the lilies of the field (flowers), because for Jesus divine Providence passes through the fraternal organization. To be concerned about the Kingdom of God and its justice is the same as to be concerned about accepting God, the Father and of being brother and sister of others.

\**(excerpted from: //ocarm.org; www.rc.net)*



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## ***The Parable of the Birds of Heaven and the Lilies of the Field***



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food and clothes for everybody.***

## **THE PARABLE OF THE BIRDS OF HEAVEN AND LILIES IN THE FIELD**

A parable is a short, fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. Parables are never meant to be taken for the letter of their word. When taken literally, at face value, the entirety of its meaning is lost.

\*Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 6: 24-34: 'No one can serve two masters; he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money... Look at the birds in the sky. They do not sow or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them...'

What does "serving two masters" and "anxiety" have in common? They both have the same root problem -- being divided within oneself. The root word for "anxiety" literally means "being of two minds". An anxious person is often "tossed to and fro" and paralyzed by indecision. Fear of some bad outcome usually cripples those afflicted with anxiety. It is also the case with someone who wants to submit to God but also love according to the world's standards of success and fulfillment.

This parable helps us to review the relationships with material goods and presents two themes of diverse importance: our relationship with money (Mt. 6: 24) and our relationship with Divine Providence (Mt. 6: 25-34). The advice given by Jesus gave rise to several questions of difficult response. For example, how can we understand the affirmation "You cannot serve God and money" (Mt. 6: 24)? How can we understand the recommendation not to worry about food, drink and about dress (Mt. 6: 25)?

Jesus is very clear in his affirmation: You cannot serve God and money. Each one of us has to make their own choice. They should ask themselves: To what do I give the first place in my life: to God or to money? On this choice will depend the understanding of the advice which follows on Divine providence (Mt. 6: 25-34). It is not a question of a choice made only in one's head, but rather of a very concrete

choice of life that has something to do with attitudes.

In Matthew 6: 25, Jesus criticizes the excessive worry about eating and drinking. This criticism causes great fear in people, because the great worry of all parents is how to get food and clothing for their children. The reason for the criticism is that life is worth more than food and the body more than the clothes. In order to clarify or explain his criticism, Jesus presents two parables: the birds of the air and the flowers in the field.

In Matthew 6: 26-27: The parable of the birds of the air: life is worth more than food. Jesus orders the people to look at the birds. They do not sow, or reap or gather into barns, but they always have something to eat because the Heavenly Father feeds them. *Are you not worth much more than they are?* Jesus criticizes the fact that the worry about food occupies the whole horizon of the life of persons, without leaving space to experience and relish gratuity of the fraternity and of the sense of belonging to the Father. Jesus is saying that life is worth more than the goods to be consumed!

The parable of the lilies in Matthew 6: 28-30, states that the body is worth more than clothing. Jesus asks us to look at the flowers, the lilies of the fields. How elegant and beautiful God dresses them! *"Now if that is how God clothes the wild flowers growing in the field which are there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you who have so little faith?"* Jesus says to look at the things of nature, because seeing flowers and the field, people will remember the mission which we have: to struggle for the Kingdom and to create a new life living together which can guarantee the food and clothes for everybody.

When in Matthew 6: 31-32, Jesus says: *Do not be like the gentiles.* He is once again criticizing the excessive worry for food, drink and clothing. He concludes: *"The Gentiles are concerned about these things!"* There should be a difference