

8<sup>th</sup> Sunday A

2-26-11

[Here's the situation: a funeral middle of Friday, a funeral middle of Saturday, major parish event Saturday night. So here is what will happen: you will hear half a sermon—I think the first half—and I'm going to invite you to write the second half. Then you can send your half in, and if all goes well, I will put it on the web.]

Time goes fast! Twenty-one years ago, in 1989, Bobby McFerrin won a Grammy Award for Song of the Year for the catchy tune, "Don't Worry! Be Happy!" [Can't pay the rent? Don't worry, be happy!] {Got no food? Don't worry! Be happy!} I have read that later that year, in the poorest neighborhoods of Jamaica, the song played everywhere; in unbelievable poverty, people were walking around smiling and singing, "Don't worry! Be Happy!" And more recently, in Juarez, I will never forget the easy smiles and quick laughter of those dear Mexicans surrounded every day by danger and some days, by hunger. These are people for whom surviving the night is a real accomplishment. Perhaps people who are that poor learned a long time ago that worrying accomplishes nothing. Instead, they pray their "rosarios" and cry out to Our Lady of Guadalupe to protect them for another day. "Virgin Mary, all we have is you!"

In ten verses of Matthew 6, Jesus four times said, "Do not worry!"—don't worry about what to eat, about what to drink, about what to wear, even about how long you will live. And he said that, not to the wealthy, but to people who had nothing: no savings, no

Social Security, people unable even to read, no health care. Only 5% lived to be 30 years old; only 5% could read. His listeners were small farmers who had to give 35% of their crop to the Romans. "Don't worry! Be Happy!" "Your father knows what you need. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and food and drink and clothing will be given you besides."

And this Sunday morning, most of the Catholics who will hear this Gospel will be poor. They will say, "Si, padre! We understand! We know that all we have is God!"

OK. That's the first half. I invite you to complete this message, and then send it in. Some possible lines of thought you may want to use:

- a. What good has worrying every accomplished in my life?
- b. How in the world might I worry less and trust God more?
- c. What would my life look like if I really sought first the Kingdom of God?

(But if you don't get around to it, don't worry!)