

Well, I have to admit I could not exactly remember the questions, but I did spend some time thinking about worry/anxiety and faith... below are some of my thoughts.

I have always been impressed when I meet someone with strong faith; they seem calm, secure and have great wisdom. I used to think that people who seem so faithful had been somehow blessed with an extra holiness gene, or perhaps just lived an extra good life, made better choices or just all around have the 'skills' to be a good Christian. I am coming to realize that more often than not, they have actually gotten to this point by experiencing many trials and challenges in life, and that through this process; they have turned to God out of necessity. When you feel the peace that comes with pouring out your needs and worries to him, it changes you bit by bit. It takes the burden and makes it somewhat lighter to know that you are not alone in your struggle. It takes the pain and replaces it with love, which in turn, eventually allows you to show that love, feel that calm, and embrace the trials as they come.

I don't think the world will ever be free of anxiety and worry. I think worry can actually be a good thing, if you let it lead you to God and feel the power that He has to let you know that you are loved, cared for and will be OK, in spite of all the chaos of this world. I think without the bad stuff, the stuff that shows us our need, many may not find their way to understanding that he is always there for us. As you build that relationship – you come to know where to turn when life shows you the next struggle. Through the journey you begin to become the person of faith who can truly know God's presence in their life. Through this journey you can begin to be a model for others, not by being 'better' at faith, but wanting to share with others what you have been shown.

I am changing every day (sometimes in the right direction and sometime sliding back) – I still needlessly worry and have a long way to go, but over the last 10 years, I can honestly say that I have been changed, and I now know "how" to hand it over to God through prayer, but still struggle to realize "when" I need to. I continue to pray that I will grow in wisdom and lead others to faith by example. It feels so good to be on a road towards that, instead of lost in the isolation of anxiety.

Thank you for yet another inspiring experience at mass that challenged me to take some time to think and grow. You are a gift to all of us - thank you!

Peace,
Holly Dieterle

A "few" thoughts for the second part of your homily;

The phrase "Don't worry be Happy" came from an Indian Guru named Meher Baba, when Bobby McFerrin saw a poster of Meher Baba with this phrase he thought it was "a pretty neat philosophy in four words." I became attached to the song when my son (Donnie) was in Iraq. He told me they sang this all the time as a reminder of the good things, when they lay in there wooden building, when they went out on patrol and some even picked up on the words and sang with them! I was a constant worrier even about things that may never happen. My dad used to tell me "If it affects today, take care of it, if it is something that might affect tomorrow, next week, a year from now...Let go of it. I tried every day to follow this but the worry was just there. I have things coming from all directions that I feel I need to worry about in order to take care of, mainly the people in my life and all that will affect them, the hungry, the cold, homeless and lonely, the children of our World. I associate worry with caring. Then I learned a valuable lesson....when we worry we haven't done enough for the ones we love maybe that is when God has taken part in our journey because worry stops us from taking the steps forward on our journey, if all we do is worry we are not helping anyone and more times than not adding more irons to the fire not to mention our health. I learned the words "Let Go Let God" amazing enough this is also four little words... God doesn't take our worries away but He increases our Faith and when we hold onto our Faith our

worries dissipate. Now when I pray I always add "Lord I turn this over to you" and I let God increase my Faith. Of course I am a work in progress for God but that is for you and God to "worry" about, (just joking-be happy) I have Faith that the two of you can handle this and more. I have also learned God answers "knee mail and offers unlimited minutes, this makes me Happy) to quote one of your Homily's "We all have Camel Dung it is what we do with it that matters" :)

Thank You Fr. Bill for yet another Homily that keeps hitting home.

God Bless,
Mary Kaye Neuhaus

My "sermon part" isn't really "the rest of the story". I have gotten sidetracked with this idea. I understand that worry does not accomplish anything and that prayer is so important. And here comes the but.....

But, a person should not just sit back and pray for God to take care of everything without making an effort and doing their part. (I told Pat about this and even he said that it is not the second half!)

This is what came to mind - Sorry about going in the wrong direction with this - you do make us think!!!!!! And that is a good thing!

Keep up the good work and God bless you.

Love and prayers,
Mary Lou McKee