

**31. January**

**“Carelessness as a gift”**

St. Don Bosco

***Phil 4.4-9***

***Always be joyful, then, in the Lord; I repeat, be joyful. Let your good sense be obvious to everybody. The Lord is near. Never worry about anything; but tell God all your desires of every kind in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude, and the peace of God which is beyond our understanding will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, let your minds be filled with everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is upright and pure, everything that we love and admire -- with whatever is good and praiseworthy. Keep doing everything you learnt from me and were told by me and have heard or seen me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.***

The holy priest and founder whom the Church commemorates on this day, St. John Bosco, dedicated his life in a special way to the unattended youth of Turin. He tried to help them through a positive and preventive education, based on faith. Don Bosco was a priest who trusted very much in Divine Providence, and so he applied to his life the words of today's reading: *“Never worry about anything; but tell God all your desires of every kind in prayer and petition shot through with gratitude”*.

This verse brings to mind that passage in the Gospel, when Jesus tells his disciples: *“That is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them. And how much more you are worth than the birds! Can any of you, however much you worry, add a single cubit to your span of life? If a very small thing is beyond your powers, why worry about the rest? Think how the flowers grow; they never have to spin or weave; yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his royal robes was clothed like one of them. Now if that is how God clothes a flower which is growing wild today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, who have so little faith! But you must not set your hearts on things to eat and things to drink; nor must you worry. It is the gentiles of this world who set their hearts on all these*

*things. Your Father well knows you need them. No; set your hearts on his kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well” (Lk 12,22-31).*

This word has accompanied me personally since my conversion, and I can testify that it is true and that it is really fulfilled when one relies completely on the Lord. Our Father knows what we need!

This is a key word for our whole life, which gives us great security, founded on God and on trust in Him. But this is not the most important point; even more essential is the fact that God wants to give us a gift in this way. For Him it is a joy to take care of His children, and in this way He can express His love to us and assure us that He is always with us. This is what He wants! Jesus came into the world to make the Father known to us, to show us what He really is: a loving Father.

Carelessness, not to be confused with human optimism, is linked to concern for the Kingdom of God. We could put it that way: We care about the great concerns of God and He equips us with everything we need for our life and ministry. However, this is not to be understood as a "barter" or a "deal" that we make with God. Rather, it is an exchange of love! We know a similar word from an ecclesiastically recognized apparition of Our Lady in Banneux, Belgium. There Mary said: *"Believe in me and I will believe in you!"*

The Lord wants to lead us into a very close communion with Him, in which we can be sure of His care and His love, and from which the joy mentioned in today's text also arises. Joy in God and for God's sake, when we can live in His love and constant company, becomes an inexhaustible source, which floods us and can also reach others through us. St. John Bosco expressed it in his famous phrase: *"The best thing we can do in the world is to do good, be joyful and let the sparrows whistle".*

But we must also perceive when we are invaded by the dark shadows of unnecessary worries, when we are too eager to take everything into our own hands and are not attentive to the plans that the Lord has and the paths that He opens up. Unnecessary worries make us live in an inner tension; they rob us of the lightness and agility in faith, and also the beauty of faith that comes from joy!

*"Throw all your worries on him, for he cares for you (1 Pt 5,7)!"*

Let us put these words into practice! God expects us to!