Welcome to the third week of our series Catholic Atheist. We will be looking at some of the ways we profess to believe in God, but then by our thinking or attitudes we betray that belief. We believe we have a personal God that we can communicate with him in prayer and yet we don’t for a variety of reasons. Maybe one of those reasons is brought about because of worry.

We worry that we are not where we should be in personal development. We worry because we recognize that we don’t have 100 percent control of a situation. Worrying destroys our life both physically and spiritually. Worry chokes and strangles life out of us. Too often we waste emotional and intellectual energy worrying about stuff when we could be channeling that same energy to solve a problem and make progress on the very things that cause us to worry.

Worry is destructive because it drives a wedge in our relationship with God. It communicates a lack of faith in both God’s ability and God’s desire to care for us and meet our needs. Worry tells God “You really don’t care about me. You don’t love me.” Worry communicates to God “you are not really in control.” Worry tells God he can’t or won’t help you. Because worry warps our view of God, strangles the very life out of us and our ability to perform. God tells us don’t do it – give up your worry.

God tells us to seek, to ask and to knock, to give to him our concerns, our doubts. Worry does not lead to trust in God. It leads to a place where we begin to view God as the enemy as holding out on us. The more we engage in worry, the deeper the divide with God becomes and when we don’t trust God to come through for us, all we can think about is us.
And in the Gospel passage we heard the story of the woman at the well. A Samaritan woman goes to the well to draw water, meets Jesus engage him in conversation, and gets a whole lot more than what she bargained for. She left her house hoping to have one particular thirst quenched and she meets this man called Jesus who causes her to have some concern – some level or worry, as to just that this man might be.

And how does the woman react? She leaves her water jar at the well and went into the town. The woman left her water jars. Shy? Shy would she do that? There could be many reasons. But, maybe it is because she realized that the need for God was her deepest need, not because other things aren’t important. They are. But the degree to which we allow God to give us living water, the degree to which we allow God to dwell in us and comfort us and feed us shape the very way we experience every other need, challenge, disappointments, or desire. The only way these other things, the basic struggles and sorrow of life, won’t get the best of us is if we know and believe and understand the depth of God’s great love and concern for us.

The water God provides for us does not eliminate our other needs or longings. Rather it sustains and nourishes us during life’s trying times. It shapes how we deal with and experience the ups and downs that come our way. The water our loving God provides brings comfort and relief even when our day to day lives don’t.

- If we worry about money, make wise decisions with what we have today. Don’t spend money you don’t have on stuff you don’t need. Instead invite God into your finances by giving and save money for the future.
- If you worry about your children and what they are doing when you are not around, invest time in them. Talk to them about their life – their faith. Listen to them and then because you have invested time in them, part of you will be with them in their journey of life
- If you worry about losing your job, instead of worrying invest that emotional energy in performing well.
If you worry about finding a job, make wise decisions. Do what you can with what you have today.

Which of life’s struggles or distractions or ambitions are replacing your willingness to seek God in your heart to let him in?

For our Lord has told us in so many words to give to him our doubts our concern our worries for his yoke is easy and our burden less. We can worry or we can pray but you can’t do both. If we are praying, fixing our thoughts on God and his promises then we don’t have to worry. The Lord wants nothing more than to pour his life upon us, his love, his mercy, his healing grace, his compassion, he wants nothing more than to carry our yoke, for he has told us this throughout the Gospels of Matthew.

Our Lord wants nothing more than to take our concerns, our worries and to refresh us. But why don’t we always experience this refreshment? Maybe it is because we have poured a lot of junk down our well. We have poured so much stuff that there is not much room left for God. Anger, Bitterness, Resentment, Grudges, Pettiness, Sin. You name it we have poured it down into the wells of our souls.

Now is the time to rid ourselves of all that junk, not tomorrow, but today. Lent is the perfect opportunity to clean out our well and to make room for God.

**Today is the day to:**

- Lower the bucket of humility and remove our self-centeredness
- Lower the bucket of forgiveness and remove the malice we hold against others
- Lower the bucket of kindness and remove the poison of gossip
- Lower the bucket of generosity and remove the tendency to cling to things
- Lower the bucket of prayer and make room for our God to act upon us and within us

My brothers and sisters: now is the time. Let me make a suggestion that might be helpful. On a piece of paper write down what you are worrying about. Then
take that piece of paper and put it up somewhere in your house – on the refrigerator, or in the bathroom mirror, or wherever you will see it often. And each time you see it, fill in the blank with whatever you are worrying about or thirsting for peace, wholeness, reconciliation with a family member, healing, whatever. And when you do that, bring that desire to prayer – name it, speak it out loud and ask the Lord to quench it – to pour His life giving water over it. Then just trust that He will.

If we do that enough, we can be assured that our wells or worries will be heard and reconciled and that there will be plenty of room for God. Worry chokes and strangles the joy out of our lives. The good news is that as believers in a personal god, who loves us and has the whole world in his hands, we don’t have to live with it.

So in prayer my brothers and sisters be grateful for what you have – make your request known to God and then the peace of God will fill your heart and mind and soul. And when you do that, you will trade your worry for his peace when you humbly and with a grateful heart make your petition, your desire to know to God. God will respond for he has told us so. Worrying doesn’t take away tomorrow’s troubles – it takes away today’s peace.