

These verses could I suppose be regarded as altogether too other-worldly and perhaps taken literally they are. But what I think is the true significance is as cautionary advice not to put wholesale trust in the efficacy of material success and wealth and not to become obsessive about possible future misfortunes – they may never happen. In other words they say ‘don’t lose hope’. So much of the teaching of Jesus consists in urging us to look carefully at ourselves before leaping to judgments. This is nowhere more clearly the case than when He says: “Judge not that you be not judged” and even more emphatically: “Take the beam out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye”. So the overall message is sin can never be right. Judge yourself but leave others to God.

-Martyn Dyer

**Entrance antiphon: O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you; of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face; hide not your face from me, alleluia.**

**First Reading: Acts 7:55-60**

**Psalm 96: Response: The Lord is king, most high above all the earth.**

**Second Reading: Apocalypse 22: 12-14, 16-17,20**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: John 17: 20-26**

**Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**



**Communion Antiphon: Father, I pray that they may be one as we also are one, alleluia.**

*Without prayer we have neither light nor strength to advance in the way which leads to God.’ St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori*



## Seventh Sunday of Easter Cycle C, 2022

**Weekly Reflection: The Lilies of the Field (1)** As I listened to the Gospel reading one Sunday it occurred to me

that much of the teaching of Jesus takes the form of advice on how to live life. I therefore resolved that this year’s spiritual exercise should be to comb the Gospels pin-pointing His “life-style” admonitions to see what they all looked like in their totality. I suppose that the first piece of advice comes in the beatitudes (St Matthew 5:3-12). Then comes the rather daunting verses 21-41 full of what at first sight look like impossible demands and threats – “whoever says ‘you fool’ shall be liable to the hell of fire”; or, “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. Surely Jesus cannot mean that literally. So what is He really saying? I think His life-style admonition is telling us not only to love our neighbour, but our enemy as well, which St Paul was later to express in his own words: “the greatest of these is charity”. At the same time, I think that another thing we must learn from these sayings is the uncompromising nature of moral imperatives – to pluck out an offending eye is a powerful metaphor for having no truck with sin.

This theme is developed when Jesus gives the advice that when praying do not do it ostentatiously with the aim of seeking public admiration after which He delivers the Our Father and draws attention to the line, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” So the advice here is: recognise sin, ask for forgiveness and forgive others if we want our request to be granted. We are then enjoined (6:19-34) not to pursue happiness by an obsessive pursuit of material goods or to entertain worldly anxiety about clothes, food, drink and tomorrow: “Sufficient for the day is the evil hereof”. This is from the ‘birds of the air’ passage which prompted me to look at the Gospels in this way.