**Becoming care-less.**

As a child I would sometimes be told not to be careless; for example, if I had forgotten some school book or gym bag. More often I would be told to be more careful. I was left- handed and clumsy, and I think my parents had the hope that by applying myself, I could simply overcome these difficulties. With more care, could I not write more legibly?

There was certainly some truth in what they said and as I get older I know I need to pay more attention. On holiday recently, I needed to double-check if I was reading the Monday to Friday, Saturday or Sunday bus timetable. A mistake with an hourly service, could have been disastrous.

But being careful, makes me overly self-focussed and often self-critical. I worry about making mistakes and risk seeing myself as a failure.

I smiled then, the other day, when I was meditating on that familiar passage of Matthew 6 (25-27) that says,

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

It struck me that the passage encourages us to be care-less – though not of course careless!

I don’t think I had appreciated before how liberating Jesus’s words are. It is not that we are careless; rather we carefully place our cares where they belong; with God.

I don’t know about you but I associate excessive care with the poem, *Leisure*, by William Henry Davies

What is this life if, full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs

And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,

Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,

Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,

And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can

Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare.

Davies is right, though I feel he might look beyond creation to the Creator.

It is this turning from ourselves to God that leads to a care-less life. We are urged in the Old Testament, to be careful to follow God’s ways. It occurs thirty-seven times in Deuteronomy alone. To become care-free is firstly to trust God and then to let go of control; to let go and let God. We trust because, as it says in Nahum (1:7) The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.’ And in the New Testament, Peter (1 Peter 5:7), urges us to ‘Cast all your anxiety (or care) on him, (God), because he cares for you.’ In the preceding verse, we are told ‘God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.’

So, as we reflect on where we find this handing over of care difficult, we take comfort from the psalmist saying, ‘Trust also in Him and He will do it.’

**Leading us into prayer**

Trust in the Lord and do good;

dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Take delight in the Lord,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the Lord;

trust in him and he will do this:

He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,

your vindication like the noonday sun.

Be still before the Lord

and wait patiently for him; Psalm 37: 3-7a

**Leading us out of prayer**

Let nothing disturb you,

Let nothing frighten you,

All things are passing away:

God never changes.

Patience obtains all things

Whoever has God lacks nothing;

God alone suffices. St Teresa of Avila