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## A Reflection For Today

Tuesday of the 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent • HopeForNiagara.org



By: Rev. Kathleen Ordiway

*Rev. Ordiway is the pastor of First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, NY. She is also a member of the Niagara Ministerial Council and a member of the Board of Directors of Community Missions.*

### **For The Birds**

(Texts: Matthew 10:26-33)

I hit the parent lottery with my mom and dad. As a kid, I didn't necessarily understand that what we had was pretty special. I didn't realize that not everyone was equally blessed. My parents put us kids first more often than not, but they still enjoyed their date nights, their hobbies and their friends. We weren't rich, but we didn't know it. We had family vacations, we got new sneakers twice a year, we had delicious dinners – all homemade!

And I have tried to be a parent that would show that I had learned well what they had taught us ... to provide for my children the best that I can; to be fair, patient and understanding of them when they need advice, guidance and even discipline; to help with homework; to be an ear when they just needed someone to listen to them; to be there when they're sick and when they're celebrating; to teach them to be confident, to be honest and to be filled with God's love.



Everything my mom and dad were for us! Just about everything I am today, I credit to my parents. The perfect parent? No, they weren't. No human could call themselves perfect!

But ... we all have a perfect parent in God! God provides for all of us (not always what we want, but certainly what we need ... often provided by those around us, and provided by our hands for others). God is always fair, patient and understanding – even when it's discipline we need. Through the Holy Spirit, God provides advice and guidance. God wishes to be an ear when we just need to be heard, to have someone who will listen to us. God is concerned when we are sick and celebrates with us when things are going well. God leads us to be confident, to be honest and to know that we are always loved.

Today's Gospel passage in Matthew 10 is also found in Luke 12. Matthew mentions sparrows and Luke mentions both sparrows and ravens. Sparrows, not very impressive, rather unassuming. In the bird world, although they are bigger and meat eaters, ravens could also be considered unassuming and certainly not as

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Today's Gospel passage in Matthew 10 is also found in Luke 12. Matthew mentions sparrows and Luke mentions both sparrows and ravens. Sparrows, not very impressive, rather unassuming. In the bird world, although they are bigger and meat eaters, ravens could also be considered unassuming and certainly not as

impressive as an eagle or a peacock or a blue heron or a swan. But today's passage says that God is aware of the sparrow, aware of the raven. God knows if something happens to one of His creation. And if God cares for the sparrow and the raven, God certainly cares for you. God even knows the number of hairs on your head!

On the side of my daughter Eileen's foot are the words, "Consider the ravens." She says, "I don't need to be anxious because God provides for the ravens, so, of course, He will provide for me, too." That's the kind of Father – or parent if you prefer – we have in God. If we believe the Bible to be true, we can also believe what Jesus taught to be true – there is nothing to fear. God's eye is on the sparrow... verse 29 says that NOT ONE will fall to the ground apart from the Father – that common, barely noticed bird – and God watches over us, too! We are more valuable than sparrows, in other words, EVERY HUMAN BEING is valuable to God! To have such an amazing parent!

Jesus wanted everyone to know how precious we are to God! Even though we might face persecution, suffering, loss in this world, only our bodies can be harmed or killed; never our soul! When we acknowledge God as our loving Parent and Jesus as our Savior; when we want a relationship with God during our lifetime – our eternity has been determined and we can accept this free gift salvation! And Jesus wants us to shout it from the rooftops!

Everyone needs to know, no one should imagine that we are ashamed of our faith, ashamed of our God, afraid of how we will be looked at because of what we believe! If something becomes more important than our love for God; if something pushes God to the background of our lives, we need to rethink that other thing – whether it's a relationship, a family member, a job, a favorite activity.

Verse 32 and 33 say, "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven." We don't have to give up everything – we just have to acknowledge God's love; acknowledge God's expectations for our lives; acknowledge that we are not embarrassed by our faith nor deny our faith because of those other things and people in our lives.

So, take from today's scripture all that God promises; take God's love, compassion and guidance. Remember that God values the life of every sparrow and values your life even more so. Sharing that conviction with your family and friends, inviting them to know God's love as much as you do. From Luke 12:24, "Of how much more value are you than the birds?!"

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