

Rev Rita's Message – May 24

Worry dolls are small, handmade dolls that originate from Guatemala. I included a picture of them in today's 'At Home Worship' email.

According to an ancient Mayan legend, a princess named Ixmucane received a special gift from the sun god that allowed her to solve any problem a human could worry about. The worry doll represents the princess and her wisdom.

At night, after telling one worry to one doll, you place the dolls under your pillow and when you wake up in the morning, you will have the wisdom and knowledge to eliminate those worries.

I don't know how effective worry dolls are. I may have a try them when I have a sleepless night. But I do know that God certainly does help with our worries whether we are awake or asleep.

Today's scripture reading encourages us to remember that God cares about us and that we can trust God with all of our worries. The Australian theologian Alan Stibbs responded to these verses from 1 Peter with these words:

We cannot run away from our troubles. We cannot run away from our problems or pretend they don't exist. But we can get rid of the anxiety that is caused by our troubles. We can refuse to be burdened down by care. We can reject the kind of worry that disturbs our peace and distracts our mind. What we can do instead is turn to God.

In the Old Testament, Psalm 139 tells us that God fashioned and formed us, that God knew us when we were still in our mother's womb, and that God continues to care about us. Jesus reminded his followers in the Sermon on the Mount that God cares for us deeply as God cares for the lilies of the field and the sparrows of the air, and they do not have to worry. In Matthew 6:34, Jesus says, "Do not worry about tomorrow. For tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

There are times when life brings us a wide measure of uncertainty, and life's uncertainties cause us to worry, to fret, to be anxious about the next hour, the next day, the next week, the next month, and the next year.

These days, there are many more reasons for us to worry. We worry about the safety and the well being of our loved ones. We worry when every activity must be intentional and well

planned in order for us to reduce the risk of covid-19. We worry about how long we must be so careful. We worry about what the future will be like.

I don't know about you but there are days when I feel like I need a room full of worry dolls to solve all my worries. And then, I remember that God can carry all my worries, all of your worries, and even all the worries of the entire world.

In a world full of bad news, there is good news that when worries distract us from living our best lives, we can hand those worries over to God. As we share them with God, they will get smaller and smaller as God transforms our fear into courage, our despair into hope, and our problems into solutions.

These days there are many things that put limitations on our lives. However, there is no limit to God's care for us. When we find ourselves in a worrisome situation, we can trust God with our concerns and we can be confident that God will help us work everything out for the best.

Thanks be to God. Amen.