

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

The woman who worried too much

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Sarah stood at the edge of the crowd. Her forehead was creased with worry wrinkles. Jesus began to talk about money and riches. The sound of the word "money" set Sarah to worrying.

"How am I ever going to get enough money to pay all my bills?" she asked herself. "With Samuel laid up with a broken arm, no money is coming in."

Sarah's husband was injured at work more than a month ago. Sarah wondered where she would get money to buy food for her family.

"Do not worry about what to eat, or what to wear," Jesus was saying. "Will worrying about it help any of you live longer?"

Sarah felt a twinge of anger at Jesus' words. "How can he expect me not to worry?" she thought to herself. "Our three children need food to eat. Samuel needs medicine. We could all use some new clothes. How can I not worry?"

"Look at the birds in the sky," Jesus continued, pointing to several birds flying overhead. "They do not sow seeds or harvest grain. They have no barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them."

"But birds don't need money to buy food," Sarah argued to herself. "What's Jesus getting at?"

"Aren't you more important than the birds?" Jesus asked. "If so, won't God care for you much more than for birds?"

Sarah couldn't argue with that. She knew for sure she was more important to God than any number of birds. But she still worried.

"How will I ever get some new clothes for the children?" Sarah worried. "They are outgrowing everything they have to wear. And I haven't had a new dress in a year."

She was surprised to hear Jesus start talking about clothes. "Why worry about clothes?" Jesus asked. "Look at the wild flowers all over the hills. They do not work. They don't make clothes. But not even King Solomon had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. If God clothes the wild flowers, won't he provide much more for you?"

Sarah couldn't stop her worries from welling up like waves. But she knew Jesus was right. She listened more carefully as Jesus continued to speak to the crowd.

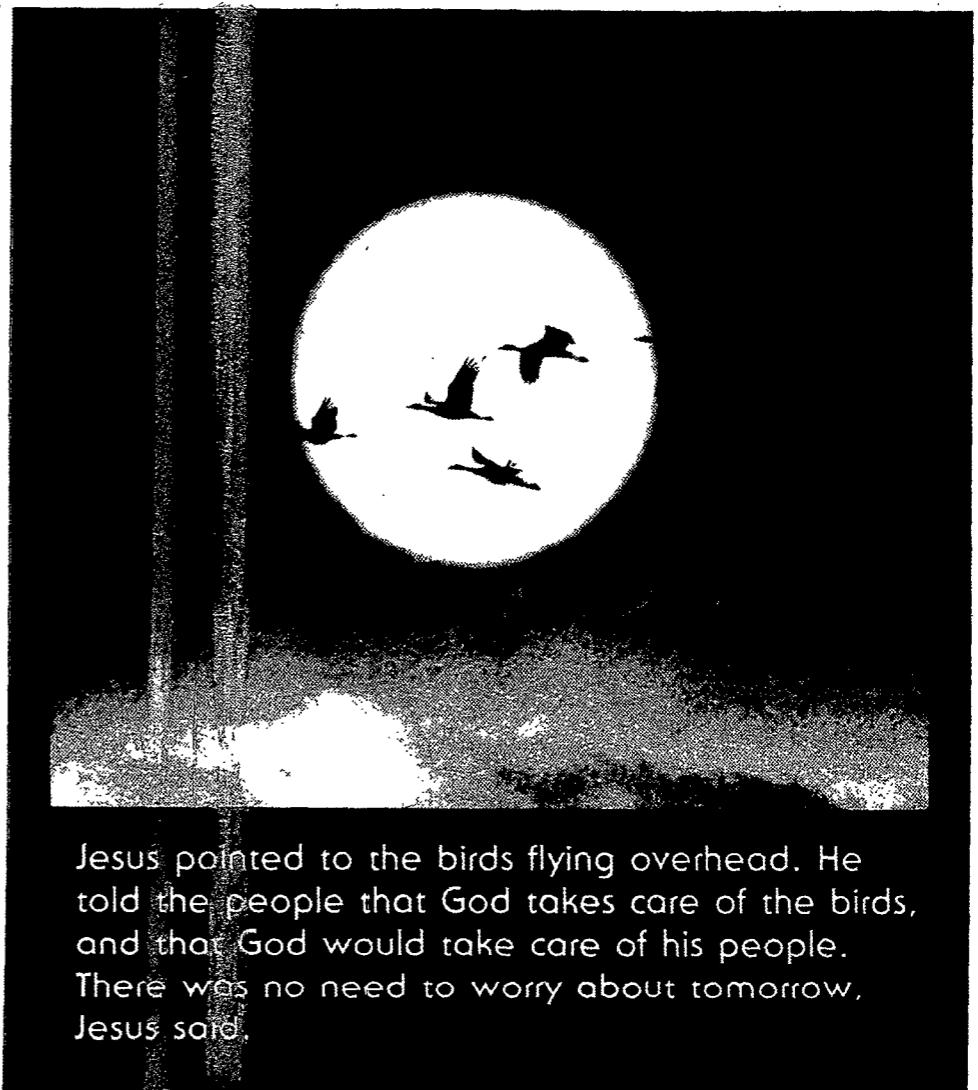
"Stop worrying!" Jesus told them. "Don't worry about what to eat and drink or what to wear. People who do not know God worry about such things and are always running after them. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things."

"I believe that," Sarah thought to herself. "But I just seem to keep on worrying anyway."

"Above all else," Jesus urged, "be concerned about God's place in your life and what the Lord asks of you. God will provide you with these other things. So do not worry about tomorrow. Let tomorrow take care of itself."

Story Hour biblical quotes — this week from — Matthew 6:26-34 — are paraphrased.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of numerous catechetical books and articles for children.)



Jesus pointed to the birds flying overhead. He told the people that God takes care of the birds, and that God would take care of his people. There was no need to worry about tomorrow, Jesus said.



Trust

After ordination to the priesthood in his native Ireland, Father Peter Quinn came to America to give his life of priestly service to the disadvantaged living in our poorest home mission areas.

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HOW ABOUT YOU?

- Did you ever have a pet that got sick? Did you worry about your pet? What did you do?
- What was Sarah worried about? How did Jesus' words help her?

Children's Reading Corner

"Natural History" by M. B. Goffstein is a story that children and adults can read together. Afterward they might talk about what they can do to help others who are unhappy. The book looks at our world and finds that people fight, that natural resources are destroyed, that there are animals and people who do not have homes. The book also looks at the world's riches: fruit on the trees, vegetables in the earth, wheat shimmering in the sun. "Every living creature is our brother and our sister, dearer than the jewels at the center of the earth," the author writes. "So let us be like tiny grains of sand, and protect all life from fear and suffering." It is an exquisite reminder that each of us is called to do something about the worries and anxieties of our sisters and brothers. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux Inc., 19 Union Square W., New York, N.Y. 10036, 1979. Hard back, \$7.95.)