I am struck by the image of the loving parent who will never forsake a child, no matter how much the youth has mis-stepped. After reading Isaiah 49: 14-15, I was reminded of two essays by an America Magazine writer, Nick Genovese. The point is not that one candidate is more socially just than another; the point is that God loves us unconditionally, no matter how far we have thrown him under the bus. And I believe that respect for differing viewpoints, even during a time as divisive as today, is the just way to treat each other.

The Gospel, Matthew 6:24-34, conjures up a thread from Laudato Si. Did you know that consumption occurs 30 times in the encyclical? And, in most cases, Pope Francis contends that our over consumption is negatively impacting the balance of nature and the lives of the poorest people on our planet.

Just a few days before I wrote this resource, the United States President ordered that processes restart to approve the Dakota Access Pipeline and the Keystone XL Pipeline. I commiserated with a friend after liturgy, “No matter what you feel about the burning of fossil fuels to meet our energy need, is anyone asking the question why we feel the need to fuel (pardon the pun) our excessive lifestyle by building more pipelines?” Can we move our culture from the audacity to overconsume limited natural resources just “because we can?”

Jesus reminds us in today’s Gospel to desist from worrying about the acquisition of material goods. For me, the punchline is the second last sentence, “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.” It is when we are obsessed with worries over material security that our prayer life will truly suffer.

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